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BY ROSSER HOWARD TAYLOR

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SLAVEHOLDING IN NORTH CAROLINA: AN ECONOMIC VIEW

By

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FOREWORD

From the economic standpoint, there was probably a greater variety of slaveholding interests in North Carolina than was to be found in any of the slaveholding states. The situation was unique in that both cotton and tobacco were grown on a considerable scale. The Carolina tobacco belt was a southerly extension of the Virginia belt; and hence the slaveholding régime in this area was not unlike that in the Virginia piedmont. Cotton was grown over widely scattered areas, but attained the proportions of a major crop in only two districts. The one, comprising the counties of Edgecombe, Bertie, Pitt, Martin, and Lenoir, was located in the eastern part of the State; the other, comprising the counties of Mecklenburg, Iredell, Union, Anson, and Richmond, was located to the southwestward. Between the two districts, in the region of the sandhills, lay the greatest extent of the turpentine belt; and farther to the southeast, near the coast, rice was a leading staple. The one important crop grown everywhere was corn.

The State was thus divided into a number of rather well-defined economic districts in which there existed a variety of practices in the work and management of slaves. The development of slavery in relation to the prevailing industries in the several districts of the State had been studied with a view to showing how industry was conditioned by the slave régime and *vice versa*. By the use of plantation records, an effort has been made to discern the chief problems which confronted slaveowners in the management of their establishments. Lastly, an inquiry has been attempted regarding the profitableness of slaveholding in different periods. To supplement Chapter I, which deals with the economic foundations of slavery in the eighteenth century, the "Importation of Slaves" has been treated in Chapter II.

Material of any kind for the early phases of slavery is fragmentary, the chief reliance being the *Colonial Records*, Legislative Papers, early histories, and wills. For the nine-

teenth century, there is a greater wealth of material, including the *Ruffin Papers, Murphey Papers,* Legislative Papers, farm journals, newspapers, and plantation records. The main repositories of this material are the State Library and the North Carolina Historical Commission at Raleigh.

This study was undertaken as a doctoral dissertation for the University of Michigan, and I wish to express my gratitude to Professor U. B. Phillips for a critical reading of the manuscript, and for helpful advice at all stages of its preparation. To the entire staff of the North Carolina State Library, and to Miss Mary Thornton of the library of the University of North Carolina, I am indebted for courteous assistance. I desire also to acknowledge my obligation to Mrs. J. M. Winfree of Raleigh for permission to use the Devereux Plantation Book. To my colleagues in the University of North Carolina, Professor F. B. Simkins and Mr. H. T. Shanks, and to my wife, who has rendered very material assistance in putting the manuscript in its final shape, my thanks are due.

R. H. TAYLOR.

Chapel Hill, N. C.
Feb. 12, 1925.

CHAPTER I

Slaveholding in the Eighteenth Century

Negroes, whose status prior to 1715[1] is somewhat in doubt, were first brought into North Carolina by pioneer settlers from Virginia. However, since both negroes and white settlers were originally from Virginia, it is reasonably certain that the negroes, through force of custom, were kept in much the same status as the negroes in Virginia; this notwithstanding the fact that the Albemarle section was freely derided as affording a refuge for servant debtors and runaway slaves.[2] Concerning slavery in the seventeenth century virtually nothing is ascertainable except as to proprietary instructions. These instructions, while revealing practically nothing as regards the conditions of slaveholding in the colony, indicate that the proprietors consistently encouraged the bringing in of slaves by offering grants of land, not in excess of fifty acres, to bona fide settlers for each imported able-bodied slave above the age of fourteen years.[3] It is not, however, until the close of the first decade of the eighteenth century that any data indicating the number of slaves in the colony are available. In two letters, written in 1709 and 1710, the Reverend James Adams stated that in the parish of Currituck there were 539 "souls" of which 97 were negroes, while in the neighboring parish of Pasquotank, out of a total population of 1,332 persons 211 were negroes.[4] There was an increasing esteem for slave labor as evidenced by the efforts of the early planters to obtain young negroes to bequeath to their sons and daughters,[5] and by the remark of the missionary, John Urmstone, who deemed the sons of the old planters particularly fortunate in having a great number of

[1] So far as the records show, it was not until 1715 that an act of the Assembly gave legal sanction to the institution of slavery in the colony.

[2] *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, I, 371. Hereafter this publication will be cited as "*C.R.*," and the State Records of North Carolina as "*S.R.*"

[3] *C.R.*, I, 87, 182.

[4] *Ibid*, I, 720, 722.

[5] Grimes, *Abstract of North Carolina Wills*, pp. 257, 262, 303, 324.

slaves who understood most handicrafts.[6] Notwithstanding, labor and capital were scarce; and the early settlers, left somewhat to their own devices, resorted to small-scale farming in which slave labor was an important, but by no means a controlling factor.

Throughout the proprietary period and in some degree to the close of the eighteenth century slave labor was not, as a rule, quite so efficient as it came to be at a later date. Numerous advertisements in colonial newspapers for runaway slaves disclose that many of them spoke broken English and bore on their bodies unmistakable signs of having been born in Guinea. Such a class of labor was fitted only for the crudest work; but gradually, through training and contact with the whites, there developed among the slaves born in the colony a class of labor equipped for farm and plantation work.[7] With the advent of trained slave labor, slavery passed from the experimental stage to a stage of permanency and became a controlling factor in the social and economic life of the community.

Perhaps the chief demand for slave labor arose in connection with the growing of tobacco in the region between Albemarle Sound and the Virginia boundary. Governor Dobbs, in his report to the Board of Trade in 1764, remarks, "tobacco will flourish in the colony, but is only grown near the Virginia line, where about 2000 hogsheads are made, but chiefly exported from Virginia."[8] The early cultivation and harvesting of tobacco was a simpler process than that in vogue in the bright leaf tobacco belt at the present time. The small plants were transplanted by hand, and in the cultivation of the plants hoes instead of plows were used with the result that more labor was required for a given unit of land than is necessary at present. In colonial times the grown stalks were cut when ripe, hung on sticks, and placed in a well-ventilated barn for drying.[9]

[6] *C.R.*, I, 764.

[7] Brickell, *Natural History of North Carolina*, p. 272.

[8] *C.R.*, IV, 1029.

[9] Bruce, *Economic History of Virginia*, I, 440. A furnace for curing tobacco was invented about 1860. See *Southern Planter*, Jan. 1861, p. 49.

The process of preparing the tobacco for prizing and marketing was simplified by making but three grades of the entire crop,[10] and the subsequent rehanging and bulking for prizing in hogsheads was largely a matter of routine. Despite the simple methods of cultivation and harvesting, the successful handling of a crop of tobacco called for a certain amount of training. Only the slaves of trusted judgment were employed in cutting the ripe stalks, but all able-bodied slaves were used in hoeing the plants and in "breaking out" the suckers.[11] Even small children were useful in killing the worms which fed on the plants during the three or four months between the transplanting and the harvest.

The price of tobacco was uncertain and often disappointing. As early as 1666, complaint was made that the tobacco market had been glutted "for divers years past, and for that reason is come to that low rate that were the times peaceable and the trade open it would not purchase necessarys for the planters."[12] For remedy, it was recommended by the Lord Proprietor and the General Assembly of Maryland that there be a cessation of tobacco planting throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the Southward plantations for one year. Such an agreement was made at James City, Virginia, July 12, 1666; and, accordingly, no tobacco was lawfully planted in the three colonies in 1667.[13] Upon complaint by the Virginia planters that the Carolina tobacco was not inspected and that the Carolina planters were under no regulation as to the making and planting of tobacco, the Virginia Assembly, in 1679 and again in 1705, passed laws prohibiting the importation of Carolina tobacco into Virginia.[14] As a result of the enforcement of this prohibition, the Albemarle growers labored under a great disadvantage in the marketing of their staple, as they were forced to rely mainly

[10] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 83.

[11] Suckers are sprouts which grow out of the tobacco stalk just above the original leaves. They consume much of the sustenance which should be assimilated by the mother plant.

[12] *C.R.*, I, 117.

[13] *Ibid.*, I, 144.

[14] Hening, *Statutes at Large of Virginia*, 1705, Ch. 5.

upon the precarious practice of selling their tobacco to New England traders whose sloops penetrated the sounds and rivers of the Albemarle region.[15]

The low price of tobacco brought great economic distress to the Virginia planters in the latter part of the seventeenth century;[16] and this distress, of course, was felt in Albemarle, although perhaps not so keenly, as wheat and corn were there grown in abundance.[17] Notwithstanding the difficulties under which tobacco was marketed, the Albemarle growers, unable to shift to a more profitable staple, continued to employ their slaves in its production.

Keeping in contact with the southern boundary of Virginia, the area of tobacco culture shifted westward in the wake of the frontier, and with it went slavery. In 1756 warehouses for the inspection of tobacco were maintained at convenient points for shipping in Pasquotank, Perquimans, Chowan, Bertie, Edgecombe, and Beaufort counties.[18] A movement of Virginia planters with slaves into the northern and central counties, about the middle of the eighteenth century,[19] undoubtedly promoted the extension of tobacco culture into the piedmont where the soil was adapted for growing the better grades. By 1786, the cultivation of tobacco was well established in Northampton, Halifax, and Warren, in which counties there were heavy black populations.[20]

There was probably no colonial industry identified with frontier conditions in which slave labor could be more economically employed than in the gathering of naval stores. With the exception of the edged tools used in "chipping" or "barking" the pine trees and in cutting the turpentine "boxes"

[15] Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, p. 117. Governor Burrington's report on the State of the Colony in 1733 in *C.R.*, III, 430, recites: "The trade of this colony is on so bad a footing that it is thought the people who traffick with New England and Virginia merchants lose half the value of their goods."

[16] Wertenbaker, *Virginia Under the Stuarts*, p. 232.

[17] *C.R.*, I, 663.

[18] *Ibid.*, V, 42, prefatory notes.

[19] J. S. Bassett, *Slavery and Servitude in the Colony of North Carolina*, (Johns Hopkins University *Studies*, XIV, Nos. 4 and 5), p. 18.

[20] *S.R.*, XVIII, 433.

at the base of the chipping, most of the equipment could be made on the ground where the work was undertaken. The barrels to receive the sap of the pine trees were made by coopers from the staves, "split from pine logs shaved and trimmed," and then hooped with split oak saplings. Considerable skill was required for making barrels, but a number of slaves in each community were brought up in this trade. Conditions of life in the pine forests were rude and primitive, and in contrast with life on the plantations, the owner of a turpentine forest was at no pains to provide comfortable living quarters for his family and slaves. Both whites and blacks, for the most part, lived in rude huts and practiced a severe economy.

Prior to about the middle of the eighteenth century, turpentine was not so much in demand as tar and pitch; and it was not until about 1800 that turpentine was distilled at the place of production.[21] Tar and pitch, used in the construction and maintenance of sailing vessels, found a ready market in England; but, owing to the generally inferior quality of the naval stores exported from the colony, the price was not always satisfactory.[22] While the production of tar and pitch did not admit of any great concentration of labor, slaves were commonly employed in this business during the dull seasons. Tar was made by burning fat pine in the following manner:

"Then they take the lightwood which they pile up with the ends of each placed slanting towards the center of the Kiln, which is generally made taper from the ground; afterwards they cover it very secure with clay earth or sods to keep in the flames. After this is done they set it on fire at the top, the weather permitting, which must be neither too dry nor too wet. By this means the tar runs into the center, and from thence into the funnel, where they attend day and night with ladles to put it into barrels prepared for the purpose till the kiln is burnt out, which is generally in eight and forty hours or less."[23]

[21] *Bulletin 229*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1915, p. 3. For further details regarding the naval stores industry see Ch. III, pp. 47-50 *infra*.

[22] *C.R.*, IV, 8. A merchantable barrel of turpentine of thirty-one gallons was made ratable at £1.5s in 1723. *Ibid.*, IV., p. 293.

[23] Brickell, *Natural History of North Carolina*, p. 266.

Where the market was distant and the larger streams nearby, the marketing of naval stores was facilitated by the use of natural waterways; but, in case the streams were not conveniently situated, barrels of tar drawn by horses were rolled to market "by an axis which goes through both heads."[24]

It is impossible to ascertain the extent to which slave labor was employed in the naval stores industry prior to the nineteenth century. As a rule, farming was undertaken in conjunction with the naval stores industry except, perhaps, in the pine barrens where the poverty of the soil discouraged agriculture.[25] The will of Dennis MacClendon of Bertie County (1725) recites: "I desire my two negroes . . . in ye winter to make pitch and tar and freight it away to New England for such goods as shall be best for my wife."[26] In 1750, John Peyton Porter of Beaufort County requested in his will that certain negroes be kept on a specified tract of land to make tar and turpentine in order to raise money.[27] Governor Burrington, reporting on the state of the Province in 1733, said: "Upon application from some men who employ their slaves chiefly in making tar and pitch that less quantities would be made and their business cramped if they were not permitted to take up more than fifty acres for each person in their families, I was prevailed upon to sign warrants for a small quantity beyond that complement, the land was barren and unfit for cultivation."[28] Governor Johnston, in a letter to the Board of Trade, December 12, 1734, stated that more tar and pitch were made in the two Carolinas than in all the other provinces on the continent, "and rather more in North than in South Carolina."[29]

[24] Henderson, *Washington's Southern Tour*, p. 79. One horse drew two barrels.

[25] See *C.R.*, III, 431.

[26] Grimes, *Abstract of North Carolina Wills*, p. 266.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 295.

[28] *C.R.*, III, 431. In 1764 the export of naval stores from North Carolina amounted to 36,647 barrels. *C.R.*, V, 42, prefatory notes.

[29] *Ibid.*, IV, 5.

There was a considerable body of slave labor in New Hanover County[30] employed in the cultivation of rice. Rice culture was largely confined to the tide water lowlands of the Cape Fear River, supplying in large measure the physical basis for the wealth and culture of that region—a region which played a conspicuous rôle in the history of the colony. The method of cultivation involved the periodical flooding of the fields with fresh water from the neighboring streams or reservoirs. The fields were seeded between March and May and the rice was harvested in September. Hoes were used exclusively in the cultivation, with the result that the ratio of labor to land bulked large. The reaping and threshing were done by hand in primitive style,[31] thus exacting from laborers a great amount of physical exertion. Indeed, so fatiguing was this labor that a certain "Lady of Quality," who visited the Cape Fear section in 1775, said, "The labor required for the cultivation is fit only for slaves, and I think the hardest work I have seen them engaged in."[32] Within the area of rice culture, rice was by no means a subsidiary crop; but it does not appear to have been cultivated to the exclusion of such crops as corn, wheat, and indigo.[33] For example, a plantation about six miles from Wilmington, sometime the residence of Robert Schaw, embraced upwards of 100 acres of high land cleared and under fence, and about fifty acres of rice land, twenty of which had been ditched.[34] Again, the plantation known as Castle Hayne, situated eight or nine miles northeast of Wilmington, embraced 1500 acres of land, 500 of which were cleared, with rice fields comprising seventy acres.[35]

[30] In 1756 the negro population of New Hanover County exceeded that of any other county in the colony, *C.R.*, V, 603.

[31] See Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 90.

[32] Andrews, *The Journal of a Lady of Quality*, p. 194.

[33] Georgia Historical Society *Collections*, II, 55-60.

[34] Advertisement in *North Carolina Chronicle*, Dec. 6, 1790.

[35] Advertisement in *Wilmington Gazette*, Mar. 9, 1798. Mr. DeLancey Evans of Warrenton, Va., an authority on rice culture in America, states that the Cape Fear River marked the northermost limit in North America of rice culture by irrigation; and that so clearly defined was this northern limit that the quality of the rice on the south side of the Cape Fear was superior to that grown on the north side.

During the Revolution the orderly processes of industry were interrupted. British armies scattered the slaves in the State and carried others beyond its limits.[36] In 1779, the State government confiscated the slave property of numerous proscribed Tories.[37] The status of slavery was somewhat further disturbed in the period of industrial disorder following the war by the action of the Quakers, who protested against the evils of slaveholding by attempting to emancipate large numbers of their slaves.[38]

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century there were no marked developments in the industrial régime of the State. Slave labor continued to be employed on an increasing scale, with a pronounced tendency towards concentration in the tobacco counties adjacent to the Virginia boundary. The majority of whites were non-slaveholders who lived in considerable isolation, and raised corn and hogs "to subsist them in the most slovenly manner."[39] The primitive régime of the country permitted hogs to run at large and feed on acorns, mast, and berries; and it is said that in the early days of the colony even cattle running at large in the forests and swamps would survive the winter.[40] The leading pursuit of the backwoodsmen was the raising of live stock; for nature provided forage, and marketing entailed no great expense. Accordingly, in the backwoods economy of the time there was small place for slave labor, except in areas where naval stores were made in considerable quantities.

Save in the regions where rice and tobacco were staple crops, there did not develop during the eighteenth century a planta-

[36] MS. in the Legislative Papers of 1784, North Carolina Historical Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

[37] *S.R.*, XII, 992 and *ibid*, XVIII, 420.

[38] *State Gazette*, Jan. 14, 1796. Quakers were indicted by the grand juries of Chowan, Tyrrell, and Hertford Counties in 1795-96 for their efforts to secure partial and general emancipation of slaves. The attitude of the Quakers towards slavery is well treated in Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery*.

[39] Andrews, *The Journal of a Lady of Quality*, p. 153.

[40] Ash, T., "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina," *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, pp. 10-18, B. R. Carroll, editor.

tion régime at all comparable to that which developed in the nineteenth century when cotton became the leading staple. It was said of Chowan County, in 1784, that a man who owned a still, a mill, and a blacksmith's shop was accounted wealthy;[41] and a writer, describing the state of society in Edgecombe County at a somewhat earlier date, remarked that agriculture was so little esteemed as to permit of one horse and plow serving a whole neighborhood.[42] Josiah Quincy, on visiting Brunswick, New Bern, and adjacent districts in 1773, noted that the number of negroes was much less in North Carolina than in South Carolina. "Their [the planters of the colony] staple commodity," he said, "is not so valuable, not being in so great demand as the rice, indigo, etc. of the South. Hence labor becomes more necessary, and he who has an interest of his own to serve is a laborer in the field. . . . You see husbandmen, yeomen, and white laborers scattered through the country, instead of herds of negroes and slaves."[43] At the close of the century, however, the plantation aristocracy was becoming more conscious of its social and economic position; so that many of the larger planters, in emulation of the Virginians, maintained establishments typical of the plantation régime in the favored districts of the Old Dominion.[44] Large slaveholdings were, nevertheless, the exception rather than the rule. Conspicuous among the larger establishments were those of Thomas Pollock of Chowan County, who owned upwards of 40,000 acres of land and about seventy-five slaves; Edward Moseley of New Hanover County, whose estate in Edgecombe contained 10,000 acres and fifty-six slaves; and Roger Moore of New Hanover, who owned upwards of 10,000 acres and about 250 slaves.[45]

Data concerning the number and distribution of slaves in North Carolina prior to 1800 are scattered and, for the most

[41] Smyth, *Tour in the United States,* I, 101.

[42] MS. in the Henderson Letter Book, North Carolina Historical Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

[43] *C.R.,* IX, 612.

[44] La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Travels,* II, 518.

[45] Grimes, *Abstract of North Carolina Wills,* pp. 292, 253, 257.

part, conjectural. The Board of Trade, in its representation of the state of his Majesty's plantations in 1721, stated that, from the accounts available, "the number of persons in their tythables or poll tax [in North Carolina] were not long since above 1600 of which about one-third were blacks."[46] In 1733, Governor Burrington placed the number of white men, women, and children at 30,000, and the blacks at 6,000. From 1740 until the Revolution there was a rapid increase of both blacks and whites, evidenced by the fact that much of the time of the Council was employed in granting lands to settlers on the basis of headrights. Governor Johnston (1734-1752) was active and successful in promoting immigration, and during his administration the extension of settlement warranted the erection of the interior counties of Northampton, Johnston, Granville, Cumberland, and Duplin.[47] A return of the list of taxables for the year 1765 shows a total of 28,542 whites and 17,370 blacks and mulattoes,[48] while the census of 1790 reports the white population at 288,204 and the slave population at 100,572 or 25.5% of the total population of the State.[49]

The census returns for 1755 are by no means complete, but they serve to convey a fairly accurate idea of the distribution of blacks in most of the principal counties. With the exception of New Hanover and Craven counties, the heaviest black population was found in the tobacco belt, which at that time was shifting westward in the northern tier of counties. Counties with the most numerous slaves were New Hanover, 1374; Craven, 934; Edgecombe, 924; Northampton, 834; Beaufort, 567; Granville, 426; Bladen, 346; Pasquotank, 366; and Tyrrell, 335.[50] Outside the tobacco belt, slaveholding before 1755 had not spread appreciably into the uplands. Orange, a mid-

[46] *C.R.*, II, 419. By an act of the Assembly of 1715, all slaves were made tythable at the age of twelve years, and all males not slaves at the age of sixteen.

[47] Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, I, 265.

[48] This report is incomplete and only approximately correct.

[49] There were 4,975 free negroes in the State in 1790.

[50] *C.R.*, V, 575. No returns are available for Bertie, Chowan, Carteret, Cumberland, Halifax, Johnston, and Perquimans.

dle-western county, had a white population of 950, and a black population of only 50; while Rowan, another western county, was credited with 1,116 whites and 54 blacks.[51]

Toward the close of the century there was a noticeable increase of the proportion of slaves in most of the eastern counties. Only one county, Tyrrell, experienced a pronounced loss of slave population from 1790 to 1800, with Martin and Chowan sustaining slight losses. On the other hand, sixteen counties, mainly in the eastern part of the State, suffered a loss of white population in the same period.[52] In the western counties quite a different situation prevailed. For example, Guilford contained 2,618 whites in 1790 and 8,497 whites in 1800. The rather rapid increase of slaves in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was not due to any change of régime, but merely to expansion of settlement in the uplands and the enlargement of plantations on the coast. Additions to the stock of slaves came through natural increase, the migration of slaveholders from neighboring states, and the foreign and domestic slave trade.

The average size of slaveholdings in certain selected counties in 1790 suggests the location of the plantation régime. The average in both Warren and New Hanover was 10.3 slaves per slaveholding family. Eleven slaveholders in Warren[53] owned more than 50 slaves each; and two men, Thomas Eaton and Herbert Haynes, owned 138 each. Halifax, an adjoining county, ranked next with an average slaveholding of 8.7. The average for Edgecombe was 6.5; for Montgomery, a southern county, 4.6; and for Randolph, a western county, 3.5. The average slaveholding for the entire State was 6.29, and the slaveholding families constituted thirty-one per cent of all the families of the State.[54]

[51] Rowan County in 1755 embraced most of western North Carolina and Tennessee. See Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 356.

[52] In some instances the loss of population was due to a division of counties.

[53] Warren was, perhaps, the leading tobacco county in 1790.

[54] *Heads of Families, Census of 1790.*

CHAPTER II

Importation of Slaves

The early planters in North Carolina preferred, it seems, to stock their plantations with young negroes rather than with indented servants, who, according to the missionary, John Urmstone, were seldom worth keeping, as they never stayed out the term for which they were indented.[1] According to Brickell, slaves were reckoned "the greatest riches in these parts," and were always sure commodities for gold and silver;[2] and for that reason planters were at great pains to lay by a store of gold and silver with which to purchase negroes in the West Indies and other places.[3] A more common practice, however, was to send tar and pitch to New England and live stock and foodstuffs to Virginia to be sold, and the proceeds to be invested in slaves. Governor Burrington accused the colonists of having money to purchase slaves in Virginia, and of not having money to pay quit-rents; whereupon a committee of the Assembly made answer: "Those who take such pains to carry provisions to Virginia at the charge of a great land carriage, do it chiefly to lodge money there to purchase slaves, which are difficult to be bought any other way."[4] On account of the dangers of navigation off the coast of North Carolina and the consequent dearth of trade centers and hard money, ships engaged in the African slave trade seldom, if ever, brought their cargoes direct to the colony. Relative to these conditions Governor Burrington said: "Great is the loss this country has in not being supplied by vessels from Guinea with negroes. In any part of the province the people are able to pay for a shipload; but as none

[1] *C.R.*, II, 261. The number of indented servants in the colony cannot be ascertained. They were probably never so numerous as the negro slaves. Laws similar to those in force in Virginia were enacted by the Assemblies of 1715 and 1741, giving the indented servants a definite legal status. There was no further legislation with respect to indented servants after 1741.

[2] Brickell, *Natural History of North Carolina*, p. 272.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[4] *C.R.*, III, 609.

come directly from Africa, we are under a necessity to buy the refuse, refractory, and distempered negroes brought in from other governments."[5]

The dependence of the colonists of the Albemarle section upon Virginia for marketing facilities and for supplies of all sorts was an outstanding economic handicap. For slaves purchased in Virginia, North Carolina planters paid not only the original cost of their delivery in Virginia, but, in addition, they paid the Virginia dealers a profit and defrayed the cost of overland transportation. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that on occasion the early planters sent cargoes of tar and pitch to New England to be sold and the proceeds to be invested in *young* negroes.[6] English merchants and factors from about 1770 to 1776 did not hesitate to sell negroes to South Carolina planters on liberal terms, and during those years that colony prospered;[7] but the condition and prospects of industry in North Carolina apparently did not warrant the extension of liberal credits by British merchants and, as a result, negro slaves were brought in through various indirect channels. Customhouse records disclose that the number of slaves who entered the colony by water was very small as compared with the number who came in by land. "In 1754 only nineteen negroes were entered at the customhouse at Bath, and during the preceding seven years the average number annually brought in at Beaufort was only seventeen."[8]

On the eve of the Revolution an attempt was made to prohibit the slave trade. The Provincial Congress in session at New Bern, August 27, 1774, resolved, "We will not import any slave or slaves, nor purchase any slave or slaves imported or brought into this province by others from any part of the world after

[5] *C.R.*, III, 430-433. John Urmstone's disposition to invest £40 in goods to buy three or four negroes in Guinea suggests that there were private traders to the coas of Guinea who outfitted in the colony. See *C.R.*, II, 261.

[6] See footnote, p. 12.

[7] Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, p. 67.

[8] Connor, *History of North Carolina*, I, 184.

the first day of November next."[9] This resolution was passed in conformity with a resolve of the Continental Congress, and its enforcement was designed to strike a blow at British commerce. Doubtless the action of the Provincial Congress was superinduced by considerations of public safety, as slaves could be used by the British authorities to help coerce their masters. There is evidence that the resolution of 1774 was enforced for a time, at least, by the Committees of Public Safety, for slaves brought in by water when apprehended were promptly ordered reshipped to the place from whence they came.[10] One Alexander Campbell, residing in the State in 1777, owned slaves in St. Vincent and Grenada, but was not allowed to bring them into the State; whereupon he petitioned the legislature to release him of the duty of taking the oath of allegiance, in order to prevent his slaves in the West Indies from being confiscated by the British.[11]

So far as can be determined, no tax was levied on the importation of slaves into North Carolina prior to the Revolution. On the other hand, the Virginia Assembly made numerous attempts to discourage the importation of slaves by imposing from time to time a tax on all slaves brought in from Maryland, North Carolina,[12] the West Indies, and Africa.[13] The first impressive protest from any considerable body of citizens of the colony against the African slave trade was registered by the freeholders of Rowan County in 1774. They placed themselves on record against the African slave trade in the following resolution:

"Resolved that the African slave trade is injurious to this colony, obstructs the population of it, prevents manufacturers and other useful emigrants from Europe from settling among

[9] *C.R.*, IX, 1046.

[10] *Ibid.*, IX, 1013, 1099.

[11] MS. in Legislative Papers, 1777.

[12] The tax on slaves from North Carolina was imposed primarily to prevent smuggling through the State. Ballagh, *History of Slavery in Virginia*, p. 15, footnote.

[13] Ballagh, *History of Slavery in Virginia*, p. 21.

us, and occasions an annual increase of the balance of trade against the colonies."[14]

It would appear from this resolution that the chief objection of these people to the slave trade was based on economic, not humanitarian, grounds; and it is also significant that the protest came from a western county. Due in part to the dearth of labor occasioned by the Revolution, there was a resumption of the slave trade after the war. It was not, in fact, until 1787 that the General Assembly took the initial step in taxing the traffic, basing its action on the general ground that the importation of slaves "into this State is productive of evil consequences and highly impolitic." Whatever the motive, a duty of £5 was levied on all slaves between the ages of seven and twelve brought in by water. Slaves between the ages of thirty and forty were made subject to the same duty, while those between the ages of twelve and thirty were subject to a duty of £10. Slaves brought in by land were to be assessed in like manner. Failure to pay the tax made the offender subject to the forfeiture of £100 for each slave smuggled into the State and, in order to encourage prosecution of offenders, the informer was to receive one-half the fine.[15] Anyone wishing to remove to North Carolina with slaves was exempt from the operation of the law, provided an oath was taken before a justice of the peace to the effect that the slaves were not brought in for sale. In addition, a general head tax of five pounds was imposed on all slaves imported from the coast of Africa.[16] The act of 1787 did not prohibit, but no doubt discouraged, the slave trade. In 1786, Henry Hill and Thomas Fitch fitted out a ship to go to the coast of Africa for slaves. Upon returning to Port Roanoke with a cargo of slaves, they protested against the payment of the increased duty, alleging in their petition to the legislature that the duty had been raised in excess

[14] *C.R.*, IX, 1026.

[15] Iredell's *Revisal*, pp. 577-579.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 578.

of five per cent in their absence.[17] The customhouse records of the Port of Brunswick, covering the period from 1783 to 1789, show a total of 290 slaves entered, 128 of whom came from the West Indies; while others came from Boston, New York, Charleston, Savannah, Virginia, and Maryland.[18] At that time the Cape Fear region was carrying on a thriving trade with the West Indies where lumber, staves, and foodstuffs were sold and a number of slaves purchased.

Due presumably to the ratification of the Federal Constitution by North Carolina in 1789, the act of 1787 was repealed in 1790, and there was no restriction on the importation of slaves until 1794. Indeed, in some sections of the East there seems to have been a disposition to wait and let Congress put an end to the traffic.[19] A letter from Archibald Maclaine of Wilmington to Edward Jones, Assemblyman-elect from one of the upland counties, affords some index as to the localization of opinion with respect to the slave trade in 1790. After stating that he hears Mr. Jones will support a bill to prohibit the slave trade with "a religious enthusiasm," Mr. Maclaine continues:

"Considering our situation on the seacoast and particularly in the neighborhood of Cape Fear, I should have thought it prudent to leave that matter to Congress who certainly will do the business effectually at the end of eighteen years. I believe you have no instructions on the subject and probably the majority of your constituents who either have no property or not considering the dependence of the town on the country might probably have been willing to abolish the importation; but though I make no doubt even had your sentiments been fully known you would have carried your election, yet you certainly would not have had quite so great a majority as you had."[20]

[17] MS. in Legislative Papers, House of Commons, 1788. It appears from the petition of Messrs. Fitch and Hill that there was a duty of 2½% on imported slaves before 1787.

[18] The identity of a few of the ships cannot be ascertained; consequently fifty-two of the lot of 290 slaves cannot be accounted for. Most of the slaves were shipped in small parcels along with other cargo. The last entry recorded was that of Sept. 28, 1789.

[19] Virginia prohibited the African slave trade in 1778, and South Carolina began her series of temporary prohibitions in 1787. DuBois, *Suppression of Slave-Trade*, Appendix, A, pp. 224, 229.

[20] *S.R.*, XXII, 619.

The opposition of the commercial and planting interests of the East was overcome in 1794, and in that year a heavy fine was imposed on the importation of slaves. While there was doubtless enthusiastic support for the measure, its passage might have been further delayed had not a terrifying negro insurrection occurred in San Domingo in 1791.[21] This insurrection thoroughly aroused the people of the State to a realization of the potential danger of a large negro population. By the act of 1794 a fine of £100 was imposed on every person convicted of "importing or bringing slaves or indented servants of color into this State after the first day of May the next ensuing by land or water;"[22] and in 1795 the legislature placed a further restriction on the importation of slaves by making it unlawful for any person removing to the State, "with intent to settle or otherwise," from any of the West Indian or Bahama Islands to bring with him any negroes or people of color above the age of fifteen years, under penalty of £100 for each and every slave or person of color so brought in.[23] Slaves from the West Indies were deemed particularly objectionable for the reason that they were liable to be innoculated with ideas of freedom and, once in the State, might prove incendiary in an otherwise peaceable negro population. To many public men of the time danger from this source appeared imminent; so much so that, in 1798, Governor Samuel Ashe issued a proclamation calling on the people of the State to prevent the landing of slaves or free persons of color. He stated in his proclamation that several shiploads of San Domingan negroes had set sail, and that one shipload had arrived in Charleston. All civil and military officers on or near the coast were charged to enforce the law without resort to violence.[24] Despite precautions, West Indian negroes found their way into the State. The landing of a number of emancipated negroes from the island of Guada-

[21] For an excellent account of the slave insurrection in San Domingo, see F. L. Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo.*

[22] *Laws of North Carolina,* 1794, p. 2.

[23] *Revisal of 1821,* pp. 786-787.

[24] *North Carolina Journal,* June 18, 1798.

loupe at Wilmington in 1803 so alarmed the inhabitants of the town that they memorialized Congress to take action to prevent the introduction into the United States of any persons of that class.[25]

The act of 1794 was not effective against smuggling. Hence, in 1806 a legislative committee was appointed to inquire respecting changes in the act of 1794 which might be necessary to prevent the future importation of slaves. The committee reported the act defective in that it was made no particular person's duty to prosecute suits against offenders.[26] The recommendations of the committee were not acted upon until 1816, and then the State moved forward rather tardily to provid enforcement machinery which would comply with the act of Congress of 1807.[27] The legislature so amended the act of 1794 as to require the sheriffs of the various counties to seize every negro, mulatto, or person of color imported as a slave since January 1, 1808, and to offer such persons at public sale at the county courthouses. Persons who had purchased illegally imported slaves prior to November 18, 1816 for "a fair and valuable consideration" were to be protected in their purchase by the State.[28] In 1819 Mary Ann Sansun came to Wilmington from Martinique, bringing with her domestic servants who were slaves. Upon her arrival, her servants were seized by the sheriff to be disposed of in conformity with the act of 1816; whereupon she petitioned the legislature for relief. Her servants were restored, on condition that she give bond to remove them from the State within four months.[29]

Much indignation was expressed concerning the re-opening of the slave trade in South Carolina in 1803. In the issue of

[25] *Annals of Congress,* 7 Congress, 2 sess., pp. 385-386.

[26] *Raleigh Register,* Dec. 8, 1806. Mr. Alston of North Carolina remarked in Congress in 1806 that one hundred West Indian negroes were more to be feared than ten thousand persons from Africa. *Annals of Congress,* 9 Congress, 1 Sess., p. 359.

[27] An act of Congress of 1807 closed the African slave trade, but the enforcement machinery was to be provided by the several States.

[28] *Revisal of 1821,* p. 1350.

[29] MS. in Legislative Papers, 1819.

the *Raleigh Register* for July 26, 1806, the editor described the action of the South Carolina legislature as a "detested, short-sighted policy, which in order to increase the wealth of a few can impose upon the State the greatest calamity with which any nation has ever been afflicted." Again, in the issue of the same paper for January 7, 1808, the editor remarked: "Nearly ten thousand slaves have been imported into Charleston during the last year. Humanity rejoices that an end is now put to this abominable practice." The legislature of North Carolina in December, 1804 adopted a resolution by a virtually unanimous vote, instructing the senators and requesting the representatives of the State in Congress to take all legal and necessary steps "to obtain an amendment to the Constitution of the United States so as to authorize and empower the Congress . . . to pass a law whenever they think it expedient to prevent the further importation of slaves or people of color" from any part of the world outside the United States.[30] The Governor was requested to forward copies of the resolution to the chief executives of the different States.

If one seeks to determine the controlling cause of the opposition to the African slave trade from 1791 to 1807, he will find that it was largely social. The indefinable dread of a slave insurrection—an insurrection incited by negroes from the West Indies—haunted the minds of the whites. To permit the slave trade on any terms meant that negroes from the West Indies would inevitably find their way into the State; hence, much of the legislation directed against the trade in the last decade of the eighteenth century was actuated by fear of contact with the West Indian negroes. Representative J. H. Bryan, of the New Bern District, speaking in Congress in 1828 said, "The only foreign trade of North Carolina is and long has been with the West Indian Islands."[31] If this be true, the importation of slaves from that source could scarcely be suppressed except by means of a general prohibition.

[30] *Raleigh Register*, Dec. 17, 1804.

[31] *Congressional Debates*, 1827-1828, V. 4, part 2, p. 2111.

It is not easy to determine how the masses of the people reacted at any given time to a given issue or condition. Opposition to the slave trade based on ethical grounds was probably strongest from 1776 to 1791, a period in which the equalitarian doctrines of the Revolution caused many intelligent people to pity the condition of the negro slave. Humanitarians in the Constitutional Convention of 1787 at Philadelphia decried the horrors of the slave trade; and in the North Carolina Convention, which met at Hillsborough in 1788 to consider the propriety of ratifying the federal constitution, not a voice was raised in its behalf. On the contrary, all the delegates who commented on article I, section 9, of the proposed constitution were unanimous in their condemnation of the "abominable traffic." Mr. Iredell went so far as to say that the entire abolition of slavery would be "an event which must be pleasing to every generous mind and every friend of human nature."[32] In 1806, however, we find Mr. Holland of North Carolina stating in Congress that slavery was regarded as a political, not a moral evil; and on that ground, he thought, nearly all the Southern States were disposed to stop the slave trade at some future time.[33]

Economic considerations with respect to the slave trade were not particularly stressed in the public prints, but it seems reasonable to believe that economic conditions exerted no inconsiderable influence on the public mind. By the close of the eighteenth century the State was fairly well supplied with slave labor,[34] and during the hard times following the Revolution the price of slaves declined;[35] hence, any large additions to the general stock would have caused a further depreciation in price. Again, the cotton industry, prior to 1800, was in its infancy,

[32] Elliot, *Debates*, IV, 118.

[33] *Annals of Congress*, 9 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 240—The opinion of Mr. Holland should not be taken as representative of the prevailing opinion in North Carolina. At this time, perhaps the majority of thoughtful people regarded slavery as a moral evil. Representative Bryan of N. C., characterized slavery as a "moral pestilence." See *Congressional Debates 1827-28*, IV, part 1, p. 1083.

[34] Increase in slave population of North Carolina from 1790 to 1800 was 32%, a percentage of increase in excess of that for any subsequent decade.

[35] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 366-367.

and its future development as the leading staple of the State was hardly contemplated by the average man; besides, the price of tobacco[36] and naval stores[37] was said to have been so low as to discourage production. Lastly, since North Carolina's share in the slave trade was almost negligible, there w[illegible] the pecuniary standpoint, very little incentive for kee[illegible] open.

[36] Hart, *American History Told by Contemporaries,* III, 71.

[37] Louis H. de Rosset to James Walker, Aug. 17, 1785, in the *James Sprunt Historical Publications,* No. 4, p. 19.

CHAPTER III

The Slave Regime in the Nineteenth Century

The advent of the nineteenth century found North Carolina in a state of industrial lethargy. The slave régime was being more firmly rooted in the tobacco belt, and gradually extending itself into the more southerly uplands where the growing of cotton for market was in its beginnings. In 1802 Miller and Whitney sold to the State the patent right to their saw gin within the State, and prior to that time cotton was decidedly a subordinate crop.[1] Levi Woodbury, who prepared the most reliable estimate of cotton production covering the early years of the industry, placed the total output for North Carolina at 4,000,000 pounds in 1801, and 7,000,000 pounds in 1811.[2] A collection of letters written by representative men from several counties of the State in 1810 makes no mention of cotton being a leading crop in any of the counties included.[3] It was mentioned as a crop of considerable importance in Wayne County; but the writer stated that pork was the staple commodity, raised in abundance and carried to the New Bern market. Edgecombe, later reckoned one of the leading cotton counties of the State, marketed 43,240 pounds of cotton and 543,200 pounds of pork in 1810. These letters further show that in the western counties the chief farm products were wheat, corn, oats, and tobacco; while in the eastern counties the raising of hogs, the growing of corn, and the gathering of naval stores were the leading pursuits of the rural folk. Land was "dirt cheap" except where it bordered streams, and the most desirable lowlands rarely sold for more than $10 per acre. In regard to Caswell, a northwestern county, one of its citizens said: "There

[1] Olmstead, D., *Memoir of Eli Whitney*, p. 31.

[2] *Executive Documents*, 24th Congress, 1st sess., no. 146, p. 13.

[3] This collection of letters, dealing with general community life, has been bound and is known as the Henderson Letter Book. It is in the custody of the North Carolina Historical Commission, Raleigh, N. C. The letters were written upon the request of the editor of the *Raleigh Star*.

are some valuable lowlands on the water courses, . . . the great objection to the land adjacent to the creeks is that without great care in the cultivator, much of it is worn out and washed away in the course of ten or twelve years' cultivation."[4] In Sampson, an eastern county, lands lying alongside navigable streams could be purchased for one and two dollars per acre, while "those remote from navigation may frequently be purchased for fifty cents an acre." In Wayne, another eastern county, the river lands sold for from six to ten dollars per acre, and those elsewhere from twenty-five cents to three dollars.

It was customary to clear new lands, cultivate them until practically exhausted, and then permit the exhausted fields to rest on alternate years until it was deemed advisable to abandon them altogether. A resident of Duplin County wrote, "Our citizens do not manure any of their fields, but when they wear out and become poor, they cut down and open fresh lands."[5] There was very little intelligent rotation of crops; on the contrary, a sort of three-field shift was practiced with damaging results to the soil. This involved the planting of corn and wheat in successive years, and in the third year, the conversion of the fields into pasture land.[6] Such a system did not permit the growing of grasses to compensate for the packing of the fallow land by the hogs and cattle. Small landholdings and slaveholdings continued to prevail in the majority of the counties, and there was apparently general apathy in industry. The traveler, Rochefoucault, noted that North Carolina was "apparently most remote from that improved state of culture which from the quality of its soil and productions it is perfectly capable of attaining."[7] Basil Hall, who visited the State during the late 'twenties, remarked that in North Carolina "all mankind appear comparatively idle";[8] and a New Englander in

[4] MS. in the Henderson Letter Book.

[5] MS. in the Henderson Letter Book.

[6] *Farmers' Own Book*, p. 22.

[7] Rochefoucault's *Travels*, II, 518.

[8] Basil Hall, *Travels in North America*, III, 116-117. This traveler made a journey across the State from Norfolk to Fayetteville by stage.

traveling from Halifax to Raleigh noticed many farms, said to consist of 800 or 1000 acres, scarcely half under cultivation. In the fields, black women were observed following the little ploughs drawn by "faded" mules.[9] In the western part of the State the Scotch Irish and German settlers appear to have been more enterprising. Their farms and plantations were said to have been kept in the greatest order, and their lands well cultivated. "Almost all have negro slaves and there reigns much more independence among them than in the families of English origin."[10] It was reported of Davie County that the land was pretty equally divided and the farmers and planters in easy circumstances with "none overgrown in wealth."[11]

Before 1830 little improvement had been made in the means of overland transportation; and, as a result, cotton farmers in the piedmont experienced difficulty in marketing their cotton. The Roanoke River[12] afforded means of transportation for the tobacco growers of the northern border, but tobacco had first to be hauled or rolled to some market or shipping point on the river over roads well-nigh impassable in winter. Cotton growers of the uplands were less favorably situated, having to haul their cotton overland, mainly to Fayetteville, for transportation by the Cape Fear Navigation Company to Wilmington.[13] Such a situation militated against the establishment of a plantation régime in the uplands, and promoted instead a régime of relatively small farms and few slaves.

The relative prosperity of the cotton-growing counties, together with the opening of the Southwest to settlement by

[9] Barnard, *South Atlantic States in 1833*, pp. 321-322.

[10] F. A. Michaux, in R. G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels*, III, 292.

[11] *Greensborough Patriot*, March 27, 1839.

[12] The work of canaling the Roanoke River was undertaken by the Roanoke Navigation Company, chartered in 1812. See Weaver, "Internal Improvements in North Carolina," Johns Hopkins University *Studies*, XXI, Nos. 3 and 4, pp. 52-64. The report of the Roanoke Navigation Company for the fiscal year ending Nov. 1, 1834 shows that 3945 hogsheads of tobacco were transported over the Roanoke Canal during the preceding year. MS. in Legislative Papers, 1834.

[13] The report of the Cape Fear Navigation Company for the fiscal year ending Nov. 1, 1834 shows that 13,195 bales of cotton were carried down the Cape Fear River to Wilmington during the preceding year. MS. in Legislative Papers, 1834.

slaveowners and the audacious attacks of the Abolitionists, gave to slavery during the 'thirties a renewed claim on public and private interest. Slave labor could, perhaps, be used more advantageously in the growing of cotton than in the growing of tobacco, for the reason that cotton has a longer growing season and requires less skill in the handling. At almost any stage in the cultivation of cotton the entire slave family, with the exception of small children, could be used in some capacity. While the plowing was generally done by adults, the hoeing and picking engaged men, women, and children, all of whom commonly worked in gangs. As a rule, the plowing followed closely on the hoeing; so that frequently all hands worked in the same field under the eye of the proprietor or overseer. The growing of cotton on an extensive scale did not effect any radical change in industry, but it was largely responsible for the extension of slavery into the piedmont south of the tobacco belt; and in the coastal plain it gradually replaced tobacco as the leading staple. Edgecombe County exported 243 hogsheads of tobacco in 1810;[14] however, by 1840 the census returns disclose that not only had tobacco culture been practically abandoned in Edgecombe, but in Hertford, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Nash, and Cumberland counties as well. Owing to the rather high price of cotton as compared with the price of tobacco,[15] the latter was crowded out of those areas where it had been cultivated for lack of a more suitable staple, and confined largely to the upper Roanoke River districts[16] where the soil would produce the better grades.

The variety of major crops under the slave régime in the plantation districts of the State differed only in one or two particulars from that at the present time. The growing of peanuts on a large scale in the northwestern counties is largely a post-bellum development; but the cultivation of peanuts with

[14] MS. in the Henderson Letter Book.

[15] The prices of tobacco from 1802 to 1851 are given in De Bow, *Industrial Resources,* III, 349. The average price of cotton by years from 1789 to 1860 is given in M. B. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry,* appendix.

[16] See map accompanying this chapter showing area of tobacco culture, p. 48.

slave labor was not unknown before the Civil War. Peanuts were first grown in New Hanover County, where their cultivation was at first restricted to the seacoast on account of the prevailing belief that they would not mature in the hinterland. It was estimated that 200,000 bushels of peanuts were produced in the State in 1860.[17] A contributor to the *North Carolina Planter* asserted that one hand could "tend twelve acres, and do everything connected with it, plowing, planting, working, digging, stocking, and picking."[18] It is doubtful, owing to the degree of specialization required of labor engaged in truck farming, whether slave labor was suited for the raising of green vegetables as a market product. At any rate, truck farming on an extensive scale was not attempted during the period of slavery.[19]

During the last three decades of the slave régime there was, in the main, no attempt to practice regular rotation of crops in the cotton counties of Eastern Carolina;[20] but, in the tobacco counties, there was quite generally a three-field shift of tobacco, wheat, and corn—three crops which were suited for cultivation on a single farm or plantation by one group of slaves. The planting season for wheat, being in the late fall, did not conflict with the tobacco harvest in September and early October.[21] The planting season for corn was somewhat earlier than that for tobacco, and corn could be harvested at any time after maturity. The wheat harvest in June called for a week or ten days of intensive labor; but, as there was usually a short interim between the cutting and threshing of the wheat, planters were not forced to neglect their other crops entirely during this period. On April 4, 1859, W. N. Edwards wrote that he intended to plant corn, tobacco, and wheat . . . "shall

[17] *North Carolina Planter,* Aug. 1860.

[18] *Ibid.,* Nov. 1860.

[19] No doubt, lack of transportation facilities was a factor.

[20] Ruffin, *Sketches of Lower Carolina,* p. 295.

[21] Weldon N. Edwards to Judge Ruffin, Oct. 9, 1858, stated that he finished cutting tobacco "yesterday." *Ruffin Papers,* II, 612. Edwards lived in Warren County.

begin to plant corn next week—not more than five and one-half acres to the hand—growing crop of wheat the same, and the tobacco crop two acres, so that my whole crop is but thirteen acres to the hand."[22]

In the counties of the upper piedmont, a region of small farms,[23] grain and live stock were the principal products. In fact, so much was corn esteemed in this section that, during the first quarter of the century, the rent of farms was sometimes paid in so many barrels of "good round corn." A written agreement between Edmund Jones and Robert Step of Wilkes County, in 1814, relative to the rent of a farm, stipulates that Step was to pay the rent in corn. He was to plant wheat, rye, or oats where corn had been planted the previous year, and to plant the remainder of the farm in corn.[24] Indeed, in the east-central counties of Johnston, Nash, and Chatham, corn was the principal crop until the close of the slaveholding period. Slaves could be more conveniently employed in the cultivation of corn than in the cultivation of wheat; for, unless wheat was grown with other crops, there were long periods of comparative idleness between the planting and the harvest, during which the problem of employment became embarrassing. F. L. Olmsted was told by a Carolina mountaineer that laborers in the mountains were not hired by the year, as they were needed only at harvest time.[25]

It is significant that the average slaveholding in the tobacco counties[26] was not appreciably larger than in the cotton counties of the East. In the tobacco belt, the average slaveholding in 1860 for Granville County was 11.2; for Caswell, 12.3; and for Warren, 20.2. In the cotton belt at the same time the

[22] *Ruffin Papers*, III, 29.

[23] Of the 21 counties in the State in 1860 which did not contain a single plantation of 1000 acres, fifteen were western counties. *U. S. Census of Agriculture*, 1860, p. 210.

[24] MS. in the Lindsay Patterson Papers in the Library of the University of North Carolina. The author has encountered four instances of farms being rented for corn. There was doubtless a scarcity of money in the back country.

[25] Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, p. 260.

[26] See map accompanying this chapter, p. 50.

average slaveholding for Edgecombe was 15.4; for Bertie, 17.4; for Northampton, 12.5; for Halifax, 14.8; for Mecklenburg, 7.7; and for Montgomery, 4.6. Since more labor was required for a given unit of land in the cultivation of tobacco than in the cultivation of cotton, and since the average slaveholding in the tobacco counties was not appreciably larger than in the cotton counties, it would seem reasonable to infer that the larger plantations would have been found in the cotton counties. In 1860, counties in the tobacco belt which contained eight or more plantations of one thousand acres and upwards of improved and unimproved land were Granville, 13; Caswell, 8; and Warren, 14. Counties in the cotton belt containing eight or more plantations of one thousand acres and upwards of improved and unimproved land were Bertie, 25; Craven, 8; Halifax, 19; Hertford, 8; Johnston, 8; Lenoir, 8; Northampton, 17; and Onslow, 8.[27]

In some of the eastern counties, many planters were so much occupied in growing cotton for market that they neglected to raise enough corn and hogs to supply the needs of their establishments. An excerpt from a report on manufactures in North Carolina in 1828 is illuminating.[28] "Many of our citizens in the eastern part of the State for several years past have been in the practice of purchasing flour made in the North and feeding their negroes with pork shipped from New York, while every fall droves of Tennessee and Kentucky hogs are sold in the Southern and Middle counties." The announcement was made that during a single week in November of 1847, there arrived in the village of Charlotte 900 hogs from the West, which were offered for sale at four and one-half cents per pound gross.[29] In 1858, pork was selling at $8.50 and $9.50 per cwt. in Raleigh. The supply, a writer stated, "is by no

[27] *U. S. Census of Agriculture,* 1860, p. 210.

[28] This report to the General Assembly was made by Charles Fisher of Rowan County, at that time a member of the House of Commons. The report was printed in the *Fayetteville Observer* of Jan. 17, 1828.

[29] *North Carolina Standard,* Dec. 8, 1847. Hereafter this newspaper will be cited as the *"Standard."*

means equal to the demand, and some of our citizens have made arrangements to purchase in Baltimore. . . . It does not sound well to have it said that we do not produce our meat and bread."[30] The purchase of meat and meal was not entirely confined to cotton growers, as the following item indicates: "Tobacco farmers have so little time for producing food crops that they buy a large portion of their meat from Western drovers."[31] It appears that the self-sufficiency of the plantation régime has been overrated. If it be true that a large number of tobacco and cotton planters failed to produce an adequate amount of foodstuffs, there were two outstanding causes. In the first place, a large slaveholder in the cotton belt considered the growing of cotton to be his chief business; and, under ordinary circumstances, it was thought to be sound economy to grow cotton for market, and if necessary, to buy a limited quantity of provisions.[32] Relative to Pitt County, a correspondent of the *North Carolina Planter,* wrote in 1860, "Cotton seems to be the mania here, and all large planters have been and are yet devoting the most of their time and attention to its cultivation."[33] In the second place, the problem of employing and managing large groups of slaves rendered it expedient to grow cotton or tobacco wherever those crops flourished.

The farms of the piedmont, south of the tobacco belt, were largely self-sufficing. The remoteness of markets, poor roads, and the adaptability of the soil to the growth of grain and grass caused the farmers of that section to give more attention to the growing of food crops. A large percentage of the [illegible] of the piedmont were, no doubt, slaveowners; but the average slaveholding was much smaller than in the East. Writing of conditions in Mecklenburg County in 1827, Mrs. Henry W. Connor said, "In this section of the County each planter or farmer raises everything for his domestic use. Their cotton

[30] *Standard,* Jan. 20, 1858.
[31] *Southern Planter,* March 1859.
[32] See *infra,* p. 93.
[33] *North Carolina Planter,* August, 1860.

is sent to market and supplies them with their imported articles or cash."[34] Judge Ruffin, who owned a plantation in Alamance County, was anxious to find a market for fifty hams and fifty shoulders and two or three hundred barrels of brandy, in 1850.[35] In 1854, he sold forty-eight barrels of flour made from wheat grown on the same plantation.[36]

The development of the turpentine industry, during the nineteenth century by the use of slave labor, deserves more than passing mention. It was estimated in 1847 that 800,000 barrels of turpentine were made in the State annually by about four or five thousand laborers, and the annual value of the product was placed at from $1,700,000 to $2,000,000.[37] This industry was confined largely to the long-leaf pine belt of Eastern Carolina, a strip of territory varying in width from thirty to eighty miles and commonly called the "pine barrens." The workers in the forests were differentiated as "hackers" and "dippers"; and were assigned tasks of so many trees to hack, or so many boxes to dip, within a stated time.[38] The blacks and whites worked in gangs in the large forests, under the supervision of an overseer who assigned tasks and inspected the work.[39] The boxes in which the sap accumulated were usually cut in late winter or early spring before the sap began to rise. On a turpentine forest owned by James F. Clark the following schedule of work is recorded:

"April 9th, commenced chipping boxes.
23rd, faced my new boxes.
1st, commenced dipping turpentine.

Mrs. Henry W. Connor, MS. in the Brevard Papers, North Caro- Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

[35] *Ruffin Papers,* II, 305.

[36] *Ibid.,* III, 29, 46.

[37] De Bow, *Industrial Resources,* III, 182.

[38] The "hackers" blazed the trunks of the pine trees with a sharp edged tool designed for the purpose, while the "dippers" dipped the crude turpentine from the boxes at the base of the blazed surface as fast as they filled. The sap which congealed on the blazed surface was scraped off and placed in barrels for marketing. It was called "scrape" and was not so valuable as the crude turpentine dipped from the boxes.

[39] *Arator,* March, 1856. The task system is mentioned as the prevailing one.

June 15th to June 22nd, first dipping.
August 1st to August 13th, second dipping.
August 27th to September 25th, third dipping.
Oct. 10th, commenced selling turpentine.
Nov. 20th, finished selling turpentine."[40]

This record fails to note the "hacking" of the trunks of the trees between "dippings"—an operation which induced an additional flow of sap for the next "dipping."[41] It is thus apparent that in large turpentine forests a group of hands would be kept busy throughout most of the year. A good hand was supposed to chip over his task once a week, and a "dipper," oftentimes a woman, could dip from 1800 to 3000 boxes a day, or enough turpentime to fill five or six barrels.[42] In a gang of hands, as a rule, every fifth hand was a cooper. Coopers worked by the day, month, or year, and turned out on an average about five barrels a day, of the value of twenty-five cents a barrel.[43] With careful working a turpentine forest would continue to yield turpentine in paying quantities from twelve to fourteen years, after which the tar-making commenced. Where the turpentine holdings were small, the proprietors worked alongside their slaves and exploited their forests in conjunction with farm work; however, on some of the large estates farming and the collection of naval stores were attempted at the same time, with somewhat more attention given to the naval stores industry. There were connected with the estate of D. L. Russell of Brunswick County 150 negroes, a portion of whom were employed in the summer and fall in gathering turpentine, while farming was pursued merely to obtain supplies of food and clothing.[44]

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[40] Clark Plantation Book, North Carolina Historical Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

[41] For a detailed account of the naval stores industry in America see *Department Bulletin 229*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1915.

[42] *Arator*, March, 1856.

[43] *Ibid.*, March 1856.

[44] *Arator*, May 1855. The net sales from Mr. Russell's stills amounted to about $25,000 a year.

During the 'forties, there was a rise in the price of turpentine;[45] and, as a result, it was estimated that, after defraying all necessary expenses, the proprietor of a turpentine forest could clear annually $300 per hand.[46] A "good negro," it was affirmed, would collect 150 barrels of "dip" and 100 barrels of "scrape" in a year. The former sold for $3 a barrel of 320 pounds, and the latter for $1.50 a barrel of the same weight. Allowing twenty-five per cent for making barrels and transportation, a large profit would still remain.[47] The profits from this industry attracted many speculators who exploited the forests with hired labor.[48] Within the period of the 'forties and 'fifties, it was not uncommon for a "foot-loose" white man to hire a number of slaves with whom he worked holdings of turpentine forests, obtained by payment of a money rental or through an arrangement for exploiting the forests on shares. In February 1853 it was reported that 300 whites and 700 slaves had arrived in Fayetteville to engage in the turpentine industry.[49] Robert Russell stated in the late 'fifties that the turpentine business had been a profitable one for many years, and that some speculators had as many as fifty slaves engaged in this industry.[50]

For about fifty days each year, in March and April, the fisheries on Albemarle Sound engaged large numbers of both black and white laborers. The capital invested in this industry in 1847 was placed at $300,000, and the number of laborers employed was thought to be about five thousand.[51] Slaves were also worked in the mines. It was reported by a traveler in 1833 that five thousand slaves were engaged in mining in

[45] The price ranged from $2.50 to $4 a barrel. DeBow, *Industrial Resources*, III, 352.

[46] *Ibid.*, III, 352.

[47] Robert Russell, *North America*, p. 160.

[48] The wages of an ordinary practiced turpentine hand, according to F. L. Olmsted, were $120 a year with board and clothing. Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 346.

[49] *Standard*, Feb. 2, 1853.

[50] Robert Russell, *North America*, p. 159.

[51] DeBow, *Industrial Resources*, II, 182. For a description of the fisheries see Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 351-354.

the county of Burke.[52] Slaves who worked in the mines were generally hired out by the month or year. Peter R. Hines advertised for forty or fifty negro men and women to work in gold mines during the year 1833;[53] and, in 1845, the administrators of the estate of General Edmund Jones of Wilkes County received from Avery Erwin and Company $144.29 for the hire of negroes in the mines for the preceding summer.[54]

The production of rice, of both the upland and lowland varieties, in New Hanover and adjacent counties, with slave labor, was continued on an increasing scale throughout the slaveholding period. The system of cultivation and harvesting departed very little from the crude and laborious methods of colonial times. On the plantation of Colonel T. D. Meares of Brunswick County rice was grown in the following manner: the land was divided into "tasks" by ditches running through the fields and crossing one another at right angles.[55] After the fields were made smooth with hoes, the trenches were dug and the seed sown and covered. The seeding began in March, and from that time until the harvest in September there was a rush. As soon as planted, the fields were flooded for a short time, then gone over with hoes to chop out the grass and to advance the growth of the rice. The second flooding or "stretch flow" submerged the plants for several days, after which enough water was drawn off to expose the heads of the plants. After twenty days all the water was drawn off, and the fields kept dry for a like period; then the "harvest flow" was turned on, and remained for about two months, or until a few days before the harvest. The ripe rice was cut with a sickle, and after one day's exposure in the field it was shocked, and ten days later it was ready for the barn.[56] On account of the

[52] Barnard, *South Atlantic States in 1833*, p. 347. Burke is a western county.

[53] *Tarboro Free Press*, Jan. 22, 1833.

[54] MS. in the Lindsay Patterson Papers.

[55] The irrigation was so managed that when one field was under water another was dry.

[56] *North Carolina Planter*, May 1859; also *North Carolina and its Resources*, (State Board of Agriculture) p. 162.

prevalence of malaria in the rice field districts and the exhausting character of the work, whites were seldom employed on the plantations except as overseers or artisans.[57]

The operation of cotton factories with slave labor was repeatedly urged as being not only a practicable but a profitable venture. Slaves, it was argued, were more desirable as factory workers than were whites, since the proprietor of a cotton factory, by purchasing his operatives, would always be assured of a supply of cheap labor. In 1828, Mr. Fisher, in advocating the employment of slaves in factories, stated that slaves of the right description for factory hands could be purchased at $200 each; and he estimated the cost of clothing and feeding of slaves in factories at $25.00 each per year.[58] That slaves possessed sufficient skill for textile work, was amply demonstrated, he said, by the fact that Mr. Donaldson employed slaves in his cotton factories at Fayetteville and at the falls of Tar River. Notwithstanding the plausibility of the arguments advanced, slaves were never used to any appreciable extent as factory laborers. It was contrary to tradition; and, furthermore, the majority of the cotton factories were located in the western part of the State, where white labor was the chief supply.[59]

The hard times of the early 'forties caused by the low price of cotton and tobacco prompted many public-spirited citizens to take stock of the State's resources and possibilities, and to face the situation with a constructive program for agricultural improvement. It was frankly recognized that something must be done to check the tide of emigration and to bolster up the declining fortunes of the State. At a meeting of farmers, professional men, and others at Washington, N. C., November 19, 1851, resolutions were introduced reflecting the sentiment of the meeting. One of the resolutions contained the declaration that "the people seem to see the force of the truth that they

[57] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 91.

[58] Mr. Fisher's Report on Manufactures, *Fayetteville Observer*, Jan. 17, 1828.

[59] Of a total of thirty-nine cotton factories in North Carolina in 1860, all but nine were located in the western part of the State. See *U. S. Census of Manufactures*, 1860.

must either move, improve, or starve."[60] From the second decade of the century, there had been numerous county agricultural societies in the State which used their influence to promote better farming; but, prior to about 1850, their efforts had been practically barren of results. In the main, farmers and planters continued to practice the soil-destroying system of clearing new fields, tilling them under near exhaustion, and then abandoning them for virgin land.[61] This condition, however, was not entirely due to slavery. So long as virgin land was abundant and cheap, it was probably more profitable to purchase and clear new fields than to attempt to improve old fields; but, when cheap fertile lands were no longer available, conservation of the soil became expedient. The exploitation of the best lands would have taken place had there been no slaves; but it is quite likely that the use of slave labor expedited the process, as it was convenient to employ slaves in winter in clearing new fields. The question as to whether it was a better policy to clear new fields or to improve old ones, each farmer determined for himself, and his decision was governed by local conditions. While land was cheap and fertile, other conditions being equal, slaveholding was perhaps more profitable than when the dearness and scarcity of fresh land caused farmers and planters to resort to artificial means for renewing the fertility of the soil; however, it by no means follows that a resort to fertilization rendered slaveholding unprofitable. The adoption of scientific methods of farming with either free or slave labor involved a change of plantation work during the dull winter months; but, when slaves alone were employed, the problem of employment became somewhat more critical. Instead of employing one's slaves in winter in clearing and fencing new fields, under an improved system of farming, it became obligatory on slaveowners to discover other ways of keeping slaves usefully occupied. Advocates of better farming repeatedly suggested the employment of one's slaves in making

[60] *Standard*, Dec. 13, 1851.

[61] Ruffin, *Sketches of Lower Carolina*, p. 89 ff.

manure, ditching, and fencing, as a partial substitute for clearing new fields.[62] The problem was not so formidable as it was regarded by many planters; the great difficulty lay in overcoming the force of tradition and custom.

The realization that the exhaustive methods of cultivation could not go on indefinitely, and if permitted to continue would eventually result in the decay of agriculture, prompted a movement in the 'fifties for reinvigorating the soil by the use of compost, marl,[63] ashes, lime, barnyard manure, and guano. This movement received the energetic support of Edmund Ruffin[64] of Virginia, and Professor E. Emmons, State Geologist. Edgecombe County set the pace. Relative to the state of agriculture in Edgecombe in 1852, the Wake Agricultural Society reported that "no first rate farmer turns out an old field, but keeps his fields improving with every year's crop and cultivation."[65] The use of barnyard manure, compost, marl, and ashes preceded somewhat the use of guano. In 1852 there appears not to have been a distributor of guano in the State, for we find the Wake Agricultural Society urging farmers and planters to make up a fund to procure "the famous fertilizer" from the importer in Baltimore.[66] In 1854 T. P. Devereux purchased guano for his plantation, Runoroi, in the sum of $52.92. Four years later he purchased guano in the sum of $117.27 for another plantation, "Montrose"; while in 1860 the amount of the purchase for "Montrose" totaled $405.58.[67] There was so little familiarity with the use of guano in some sections as to lead to waste in its application. For instance, a farmer near Mount Airy wanted to ascertain the cheapest and

[62] See *Farmer's Own Book*, p. 29, and the *Farmers' Journal*, Jan. 1853.

[63] Marl was dug from the marl pits of Eastern Carolina. Being a marine deposit, it contained a high percentage of lime. It was first used as a fertilizer in Edgecombe County about 1845. See Ruffin, *Sketches of Lower Carolina*, p. 286.

[64] Editor of the *Farmers' Register* and author of *Sketches of Lower Carolina*.

[65] *Standard*, Feb. 25, 1852.

[66] *Standard*, May 19, 1852. The first guano used in the State was the famous Peruvian.

[67] Devereux Plantation Book. Property of Mrs. John W. Hinsdale, Raleigh, N. C.

most effectual way of applying guano to corn and tobacco, "because here we pay from $90 to $100 per ton and at that price it will not prove remunerative to broadcast."[68]

The fairly rapid spread of slavery into the upper piedmont gradually transformed portions of that area into strong slaveholding communities. By 1840 the southwestern counties of Mecklenburg, Cabarrus, Montgomery, Richmond, Iredell, and Davidson were rivaling the eastern counties in the production of cotton; and by 1860 slavery and cotton had spread into many neighboring counties.[69] The rate of increase of the slave population from 1790 to 1860 was 387% in the West and 161% in the East; and in the same period the rate of increase of the whites was 182% in the West and 61% in the East.[70] In regard to the status of slavery in the East from 1840 to 1860. the following tables reveal some interesting facts:[71]

County	*Number of slaveowners*	*Number reporting one slave*	*Average slaveholding*
	1840		
Bertie	469	72	14.3
*Cumberland	720	134	7.4
Halifax	653	62	14.4
Washington	201	41	8.5
	1860		
Bertie	468	58	17.4
Cumberland	809	224	7.2
Halifax	695	93	14.8
Washington	222	36	12.2

(*Cumberland lay largely in the turpentine belt and was not a county of large plantations. The other counties lay within the plantation districts of the East.)

The number of slaveowners reporting one slave increased in Cumberland and Halifax and decreased in Bertie and Washington, while the average slaveholding increased noticeably in Washington and Bertie and slightly in Halifax. From these statistics it is probably safe to deduce that consolidation of industry was still in progress in certain areas in the plantation

[68] *Southern Planter*, March 1859.

[69] See map accompanying this chapter showing area of cotton culture in 1860.

[70] Bassett, *Slavery in the State of North Carolina*, (Johns Hopkins University *Studies*, XVII, no. 7-8), p. 79.

[71] The figures for 1840 were obtained from the unpublished records in the Census Bureau through the courtesy of the Director of the Census.

districts of the East. This deduction is supported by the fact that, in the counties cited, there were fewer slaves in 1860 than in 1840, while the number of slaveowners remained practically stationary. Taking the State as a whole, the average slaveholding was smaller in 1860 than in 1850,[72] the averages for these years being 9.5 and 10.1 respectively.[73] In Virginia the average slaveholding increased from 8.5 in 1850 to 9.4 in 1860; and in Alabama, a state fairly typical of the Lower South, the average slaveholding increased from 11.5 in 1850 to 12.8 in 1860. An examination of the following tables shows that from 1850 to 1860 the increase in the group of slaveowners from two to twenty slaves was rather small; but, in the group owning from twenty to two hundred slaves, the increase was considerable:

1850

1204	slaveowners	owned	1	slave[74]		
9668	slaveowners	owned	2	and under	5	slaves
8129	slaveowners	owned	5	and under	10	slaves
5898	slaveowners	owned	10	and under	20	slaves
2828	slaveowners	owned	20	and under	50	slaves
485	slaveowners	owned	50	and under	100	slaves
76	slaveowners	owned	100	and under	200	slaves
12	slaveowners	owned	200	and under	300	slaves
3	slaveowners	owned	300	and under	500	slaves

1860

6640	slaveowners	owned	1	slave		
9631	slaveowners	owned	2	and under	5	slaves
8449	slaveowners	owned	5	and under	10	slaves
6073	slaveowners	owned	10	and under	20	slaves
3341	slaveowners	owned	20	and under	50	slaves
611	slaveowners	owned	50	and under	100	slaves
118	slaveowners	owned	100	and under	200	slaves
11	slaveowners	owned	200	and under	300	slaves
4	slaveowners	owned	300	and under	500	slaves

[72] In 1790 the average slaveholding per slaveholding family was 6.1. There was, then, an increase in the size of the average slaveholding between 1790 and 1850; but at what point this increase ceased cannot be ascertained from available data, since the Census Bureau has assembled no statistics for the intervening decades.

[73] Since the number of slaveowners reporting one slave in 1860 was more than five times the number reporting one slave in 1850, there is reason to believe that the Census is in error. There was no corresponding decrease in Virginia. The Director of the Census states that from a cursory examination of the original returns for 1850, it appears a larger number of persons owned one slave than is shown in the printed volumes.

[74] The number of slaveowners reporting one slave in 1850 is doubtless too small. See footnote 73, above.

There was a decrease in the size of the average farm from 369 acres in 1850 to 316 acres in 1860, and the number of farms increased from 56,963 to 75,203 in the same decade.[75] In South Carolina there was a decrease in the size of the average farm from 541 acres in 1850 to 488 acres in 1860. Virginia also shows a decrease; but in the Lower South there was quite generally an increase.[76]

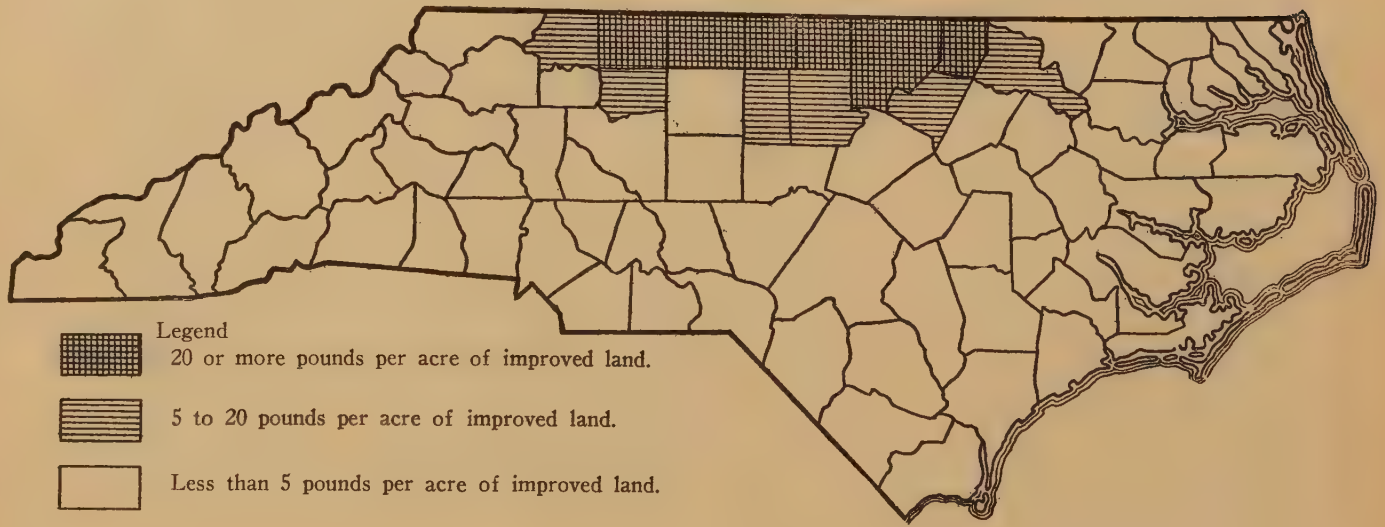
On the whole, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that in North Carolina slaveholding was becoming more widespread. The percentage of increase of the white population from 1850 to 1860 was 14.42; while the percentage of increase of slaveholders was 22.4. Again, let us assume that the size of the average family was five. If we accept this tentative premise, the ratio of the slaveholding class to the non-slaveholding class was as 1 : 2.81 in 1850, and as 1 : 2.64 in 1860. Does it follow from these facts that slavery was a decaying institution? Is it true that slaves were becoming less valuable to their masters? Neither of these queries can be answered definitely. Slaves were never so valuable for employment in North Carolina as they were in the Lower South. Since the value of a slave depended on many factors, in addition to the productivity of the soil, it cannot be ascertained whether they were becoming less valuable to their owners towards the close of the slavery period. It does appear, however, that slavery in North Carolina was undergoing a transition, adjusting itself to changed and changing economic conditions—conditions tending toward improved methods of farming and, except in areas of staple production, to a more equal distribution of wealth in land and slaves.[77]

[75] *U. S. Census of Agriculture*, 1860, p. 222.

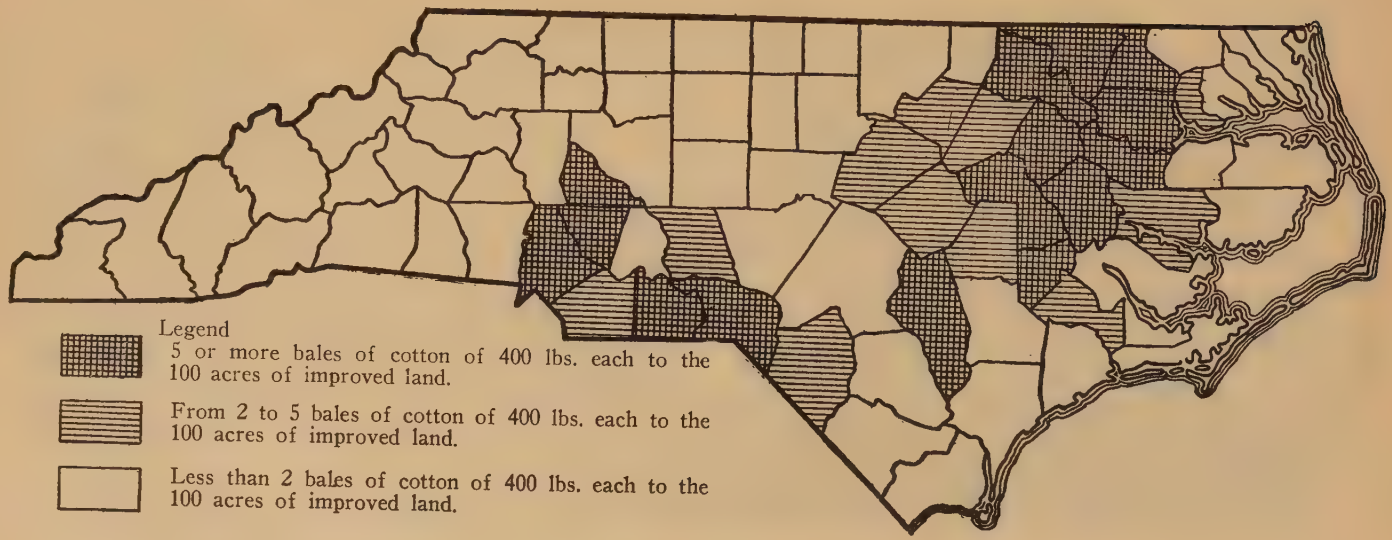
[76] The reduction in size and the increase in the number of farms suggests an increase in the number of small proprietorships. It cannot be gathered from the census reports what part of the State was subject to this change of régime; but the marked increase in the number of large slaveowners, noted in the tables on p. 60, indicates that the small proprietors did not make their appearance at the expense of the planter class. It is probable that the improved methods of farming in evidence in the 'fifties were partly responsible for the increase of small farms.

[77] The agitation during the 'fifties for ad valorem taxation of slaves was not a direct attack on slavery *per se*. It was primarily an attempt to obtain a more equitable system of taxation.

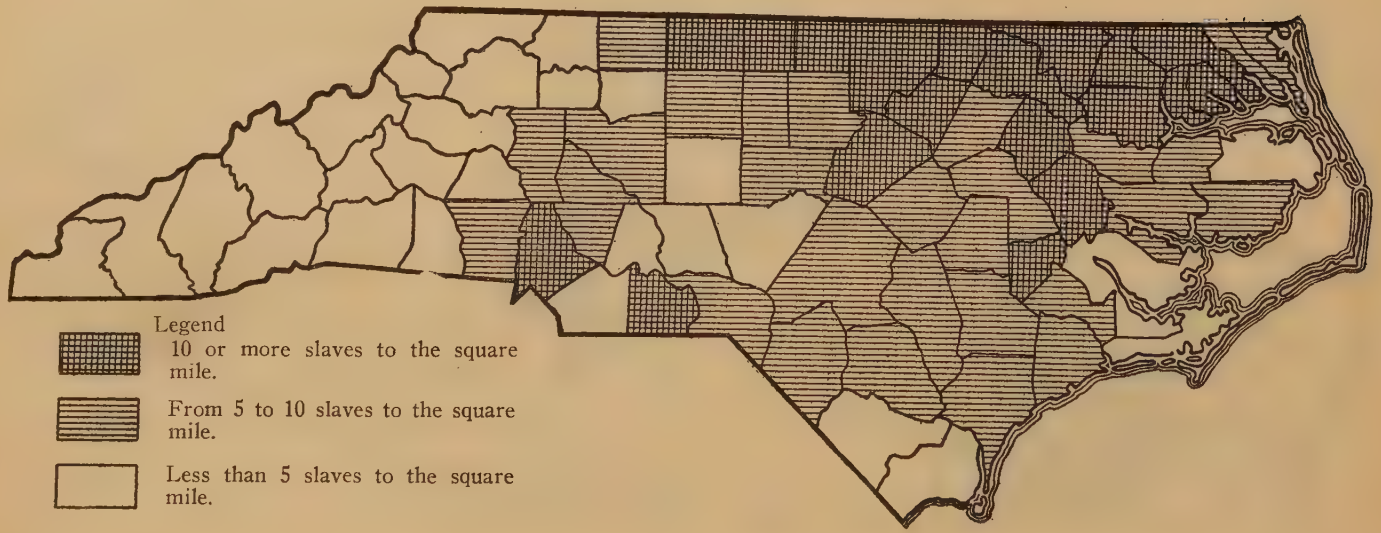
MAP OF NORTH CAROLINA SHOWING THE AREA OF TOBACCO CULTURE IN 1860


Legend
20 or more pounds per acre of improved land.
5 to 20 pounds per acre of improved land.
Less than 5 pounds per acre of improved land.

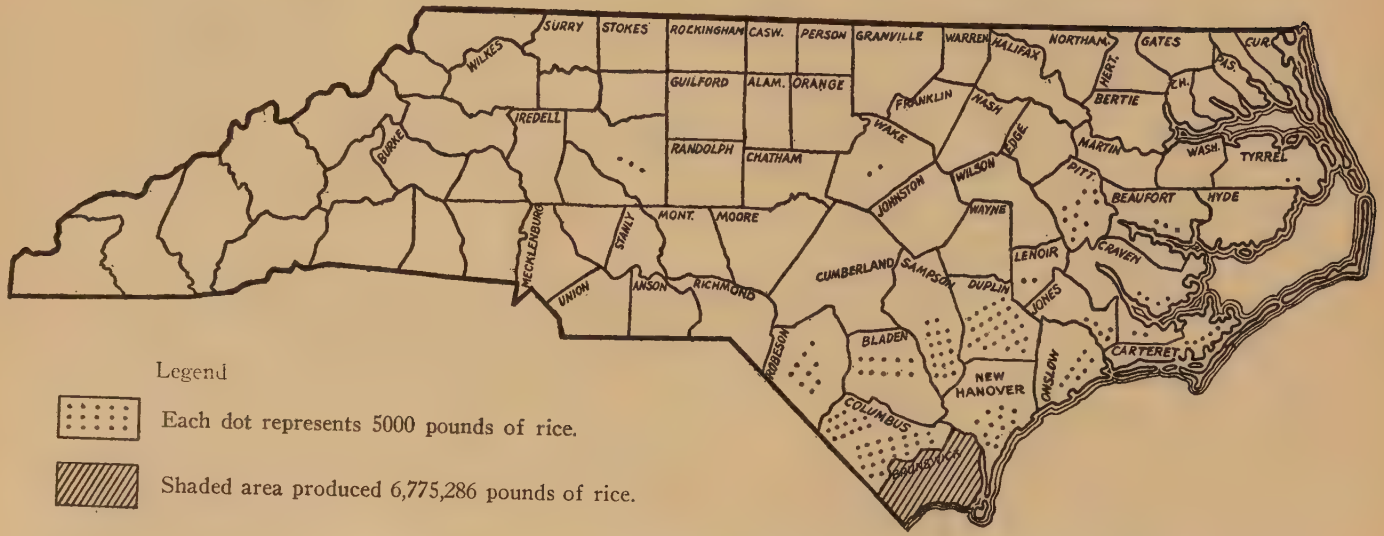
MAP SHOWING AREA OF COTTON CULTURE IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1860


Legend
5 or more bales of cotton of 400 lbs. each to the 100 acres of improved land.
From 2 to 5 bales of cotton of 400 lbs. each to the 100 acres of improved land.
Less than 2 bales of cotton of 400 lbs. each to the 100 acres of improved land.

MAP SHOWING THE DENSITY OF SLAVE POPULATION IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1860



MAP SHOWING AREA OF RICE CULTURE IN NORTH CAROLINA IN 1860



CHAPTER IV

Migration to the Southwest

An effort will be made in this chapter to investigate the conditions and motives which impelled large numbers of white people either to send or take slaves from what were regarded as the languishing fields of North Carolina to the virgin lands of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Following this investigation, there will be an attempt to determine the effect of this movement on economic conditions.

It has been said with some exaggeration that from about 1830 to 1860 all tracks led away from the State. The following tables taken from the United States Census Reports are illuminating in this connection:

Year	*Total population white*	*Per cent of increase*	*Per cent of total population*
1790	289,143		73.2
1800	337,764	17.19	70.6
1810	376,410	11.44	67.6
1820	419,200	11.36	65.6
1830	472,823	12.79	64.1
1840	484,870	2.54	64.3
1850	553,028	14.05	63.6
1860	629,942	14.42	63.4

Year	*Total population slaves*	*Per cent of increase*	*Per cent of population*
1790	102,726		25.5
1800	133,296	32.53	27.8
1810	168,824	26.65	30.3
1820	205,017	21.43	32.1
1830	245,601	19.79	33.1
1840	245,817	.08	32.6
1850	288,548	17.38	33.2
1860	331,059	14.73	33.3

Despite the almost continuous exodus of whites and slaves to the South and West, the increase of population from births and immigration was more than enough to overcome the reduction caused by wholesale departures. During the decade 1830-1840, however, the population of the State increased very slightly for reasons which appear in this chapter.[1] It is a rule

[1] See *infra*, pp. 64-65.

of population, generally accepted by economists, that a constant stream of emigration of considerable proportions from an old and thickly settled country will not appreciably diminish the total population of the country.[2] While North Carolina was not a very old nor a very thickly settled State, it would not be safe to conclude that very few people left the State because the census shows an increase of population from decade to decade. The seventh census shows that there were 283,077 white and free colored people, natives of North Carolina, then living in other states.[3] Definite information as to the number of slaves born in the State and residing in other states at any time is lacking; but it is safe to surmise that the vast majority of the slaves removed from the State were taken to the cotton-producing regions of the Southwest. Professor B. S. Hedrick, of the University of North Carolina, wrote: "In my boyhood I lived on one of the great thoroughfares of travel, near Locke's Bridge on the Yadkin River, and have seen as many as 2000 slaves in a single day going South, mostly in the hands of speculators."[4] In 1827 a traveler wrote, concerning the procession of whites and blacks moving southwestward: "I left Augusta and overtook hordes of cotton planters from North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, with large gangs of slaves, bound to Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana where the cotton land is not worn out."[5] A reprint from the *Camden* (S. C.) *Journal,* in the *Fayetteville Observer* of December 10, 1835, is significant: "During the week, we think we speak within the bounds of truth when we say that no less than 800 persons have passed through this place for the West. Of course, we include white and colored."

How shall we account for this exodus? It can be accounted for in part on the ground of the prevalent impression that the

[2] See article on "The Outlook for Civilization" by W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Yale Review,* Jan. 1922.

[3] *Compendium of Seventh Census,* p. 114.

[4] *James Sprunt Historical Publications,* X, No. 1, p. 14. Some of these slaves, of course, come from Maryland and Virginia.

[5] *Plantation and Frontier Documents,* U. B. Phillips ed., I, p. 284.

lands of the State were well-nigh exhausted. Louis D. Wilson, a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1835, asserted in the presence of that body that nine-tenths of the western lands were exhausted;[6] and the English traveler and scientist, Sir Charles Lyell, who visited North Carolina in 1841, stated that many of the planters of the Cape Fear Section talked of abandoning their exhausted soil for the Southwest.[7] It was entirely natural for people to complain of the exhausted state of the soil when they compared the condition of their lands with the reputed fertility of the cotton lands of Alabama and Mississippi. Travelers and prospectors brought to North Carolina glowing and frequently exaggerated accounts of the productivity of the soil in the Lower South. James H. Ruffin, who went to Alabama on a tour of investigation in 1833, wrote in April of that year from Tuscaloosa: "Of one thing I am most thoroughly satisfied, that though I should not get one dollar for my land, it is better to remove here than to remain in Rockingham."[8] He reported that in the Yazoo section negroes died off every few years, but in that time "each hand makes enough to buy two more in his place." William H. Wills went from Edgecombe County to Mississippi in 1840 and made the following report: "Since I have seen Mississippi and her resources, her good and cheap lands, I have become charmed and almost determined to become a farmer."[9] With the circulation of such reports, it is not a matter for marvel that a committee on internal improvements in the Internal Improvements Convention, held in Raleigh in 1833, should report that to all appearances nine-tenths of the farms of the State were actually in the market.[10] About 1822 Archibald D. Murphey, a speculator in Tennessee lands, claimed that the 2500 acres of land which he held on the Hatchie River and

[6] *Debates in Convention of 1835*, p. 99.

[7] Lyell, *Travels in America*, p. 147.

[8] *Ruffin Papers*, II, 77. Jas. H. Ruffin was a brother of Judge Ruffin of North Carolina.

[9] Will's *"Diary,"* in the Southern Historical Association *Publications*, VIII, 36.

[10] *Fayetteville Observer*, Dec. 17, 1833.

thereabouts would produce from 1000 to 1300 pounds of seed cotton per acre.[11] James H. Ruffin reported in 1833 that although good land with a good title demanded a high price in Alabama, "its desirability is certain as it will last forever."[12]

As compared with the rather high price of cotton, the low price of tobacco, no doubt, caused many tobacco growers to send or take their slaves to the Southwest to engage in cotton culture. Although there was a decline in the price of cotton in the 'twenties, the price rose in the 'thirties;[13] while the price of tobacco, except for 1839, ranged around low levels.[14]

The cost of transportation on roads and turnpikes was no inconsiderable item. For example, the distance from Fayetteville to Salisbury was about 110 miles, and the lowest cost of hauling in 1833 was from fifty to seventy-five cents per cwt.[15] While this rate was by no means prohibitive, it was an important item of expense at a time when the purchasing power of the dollar was much greater than at present, and when practically everything not produced at home had to be hauled over poor roads in cumbersome wagons. This situation, no doubt, promoted emigration from the interior.[16]

Lastly, slaveowners sent or took their slaves to the [redacted] because there slaves, as a rule, could be more profitably employed and, consequently, possessed a higher market value. The slave represented an investment, the dividend from which depended on the profitableness of the industry in which he was employed. Obviously, the rich lands of the Southwest held out greater promise as an investment for a slaveowner than the comparatively infertile lands of North Carolina. If, then, a North Carolinian saw the number of his slaves increasing and

[11] *Murphey Papers,* I, 277.

[12] *Ruffin Papers,* II, 77. Ruffin further reported that the Alabama cotton lands would produce from 1000 to 1500 pounds of seed cotton per acre.

[13] See Hammond, *The Cotton Industry,* Appendix.

[14] A correspondent of the *Farmers' Register* in 1834 stated that tobacco had barely paid the cost of production for the last 15 years. *Farmers' Register* I, 39.

[15] *Fayetteville Observer,* April 30, 1833.

[16] The legislature of 1833-34 was roundly condemned for its failure to inaugurate a program of internal improvements.

the fertility of his lands declining, he would, other conditions being favorable, sell or rent his land and purchase land in the Southwest which would yield a larger return upon his invested capital.[17] After taking into consideration the cost of removal and the cost of the initial purchase in the new country, the slaveowner would, as a rule, still find it advantageous, from a pecuniary standpoint, to remove to lands which did not have to be abandoned in the course of ten or twelve years' cultivation, and which would produce on an average, perhaps, fifty per cent more cotton per acre.[18] If, on the contrary, the North Carolina planter deemed it advisable to remain on his old lands, he found it increasingly difficult to compete with the Southwestern planter in the production of cotton. Mr. Fisher's Report on Manufactures contains this statement: "If the planters in North Carolina can barely afford to raise cotton at eight cents per pound, they must soon be driven from its culture altogether by the farmers of the West, whose new rich lands enable them to produce it with less labor and expense."

The farmers and planters went to the new country to grow cotton; and for this business they possessed experience, the [redacted]roduction, and trained labor. It was unlike going to California to dig for gold, an occupation for which the average farmer had neither training nor equipment. Farmers and planters who opened their lands for sale on the eve of their departure almost never offered to dispose of their slaves and tools.[19] Judge Thomas Ruffin, in addressing the State Agricultural Society in 1855, declared that no man had left the State in order to be rid of slavery. "When our slaveowners

[17] Slaves, not land, were considered the principal investment.

[18] The seventh census does not give the average yield of seed cotton per acre in North Carolina. The average yield was placed at 650 pounds per acre in Mississippi, 525 in Alabama, and 320 in South Carolina. The average in North Carolina was probably around 300 pounds per acre. See *Compendium of Seventh Census*, p. 178.

[19] The following advertisement is characteristic:

"Westward Bound"

"Aiming to go West, I offer my lands for sale—two tracts in Johnston, 450 acres in one and 398 in the other. Jas. M. Smith, Clayton, N. C."—*Standard*, Dec. 7, 1859.

remove they carry their slaves with them farther South where slavery is, if possible, more firmly fixed than here."[20] Indeed, many migrating slaveowners and non-slaveowners were anxious to exchange their land for slaves before leaving the State. One Haley Brown offered for sale from 1000 to 1200 acres of land in the vicinity of High Point, stating that he wanted to remove to the South and would take slaves in payment for the land;[21] and Evelina Pender, "being desirous of moving to the western country," offered for sale her lands in Halifax County, and agreed to receive the whole purchase price in negroes at a fair valuation.[22]

In the early stages of the movement of North Carolina folk to the Southwest, the small farmers and slaveowners predominated.[23] As Professor U. B. Phillips points out, the small planters and farmers removed more readily, having a lighter stake in their homes and better opportunities to sell them.[24] A traveler described the train of emigrants he encountered in 1833, while traveling on the turnpike through the Cherokee Nation in Georgia. He noted encampments of emigrants of more or less wealth . . . "having their all with them and big for the land of promise. A North Carolinian 'hearing talk' of Alabama had geared up his shingle cart and one horse, and was wending his way across the Catahochy River.[25] The lean horse pulling the shingle cart wended his way as if it had come from the land where pigs hunt in couples so as to find a blade of grass."[26] Had the institution of slavery not existed, there

[20] *Standard,* Oct. 24, 1858.

[21] *North Carolina Planter,* July 1859.

[22] *Tarboro Free Press,* Jan. 23, 1829.

[23] This aspect of the movement is discussed in Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States,* p. 271.

[24] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery,* p. 174.

[25] The overland route through South Carolina and northern Georgia appears to have been the one most used by emigrants from North Carolina en route for Alabama.

[26] Reprinted from the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post* in the *Fayetteville Observer* of June 4, 1833.

would have been a heavy migration of these lesser folk to the Lower South; but, accepting conditions as they were, it is quite probable that the presence of large planters, particularly in Eastern Carolina, exerted economic and social pressure on the lesser farmers in such a way as to cause them to embrace the opportunity of escaping an economic and social régime in which their prospects of advancement were slight. But with the appearance of large planters and the consequent consolidation of industry in the Southwest, the farmers of small means were deterred from emigrating to that region and, instead, went west or northwest.[27]

In the early stages of the movement, well-to-do planters sometimes sold their land in North Carolina and took their slaves to the Southwest in order to get the choice of situation. In 1819 Samuel T. Barnes and Benjamin Ballard of Halifax County took 30 and 196 slaves, respectively, by sea from Norfolk to New Orleans to settle in Louisiana as planters.[28] However, the larger planters did not emigrate in large numbers until the 'thirties, and then only after a preliminary tour of investigation. John Waddell alleged, in a memorial to the legislature in 1835, that he went to Louisiana in the fall of 1834 and purchased land on the Red River, after which he came back to North Carolina to remove his slaves.[29] James H. Ruffin, before removing to Alabama in 1833 or 1834, went to that State to select and bargain for a suitable tract of land for settlement.[30] William Jones of Wilkes County, after making a six weeks tour of the Southwest in 1839, came back to Wilkes for the purpose of removing his slaves, tools, and household furniture to his plantation in Mississippi. He took with him, "Wesley, Emily, John, Chainey, Abner, Ruth, George, Buck,

[27] Bassett, *Slavery in the State of North Carolina,* (Johns Hopkins University *Studies,* XVII, nos. 7-8), p. 182.

[28] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery,* p. 182.

[29] MS. in Legislative Papers, 1835.

[30] *Ruffin Papers,* II, 72.

Martha," a waggoner and four horses, "two beds and furniture, and $500 in money."[31]

It is natural for a man who hazards much to consider well the prospects of success; hence, the majority of slaveowners hesitated to stake their fortunes on a "root and branch" removal to the Lower South. Financial loss entailed in the selling of plantations, sentimental attachment to paternal acres, the expense and inconvenience of moving, the prevalence of disease, and the lack of social life in the new country caused a number of planters to retain their estates in North Carolina, while sending a portion of their slaves to the Lower South to cultivate a new plantation under the direction of an overseer or elder son. To this plantation the owner repaired at least once a year to settle accounts and to plan operations for the ensuing year. Plantations of this type were sometimes referred to as the "Alabama adjunct." F. L. Olmsted noted that many of the Mississippi plantations were owned by wealthy Virginians and North Carolinians, who resided on what he termed "show plantations" in their native States and sent their surplus slaves to Mississippi.[32] The plan of residing in North Carolina, and at the same time maintaining one or more plantations in the Southwest, could be undertaken only by men of capital. The scheme had many disadvantages; in fact, all the disadvantages of a system of absentee farming. It supplied, however, a recourse for planters who were adverse to leaving the State, but who sought a profitable investment for capital and labor.

From about 1830 to 1860, some of the most estimable citizens of the State went to the Lower South to reside permanently.[33] The following item is of interest in this regard:

"On last Sunday week a large body of respectable citizens left Rocky Mount for Texas. The company consisted of 127

[31] Edmund Jones of Fort Defiance, N. C., to John T. Jones at New Haven, Conn. MS. in the Lindsay-Patterson Papers.

[32] Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, p. 119.

[33] The County Court Records of Nash County show that relatives of the so-called "best families" of the county were residents of Alabama and Mississippi in this period.

persons, white and black, under the protection of Mr. Chas. Harrison, for many years past a very estimable citizen of this country. All except Mr. Harrison and family were from Nash. They anticipated shipping from Wilmington."[34]

The movement of slaves and whites was accelerated and retarded at intervals by financial and industrial conditions. The hard times of 1834, which caused the political tide to set in towards Whigism, supplied an impetus to emigration. There was financial depression, a partial crop failure, and, according to the editor of the *Raleigh Register,* general despondency prevailed throughout the State. "Who can look on the constant tide of emigration," wrote the editor of the *Register* " . . . without indulging in a train of the saddest reflections."[35] The scarcity of grain caused discontent and promoted further removals. To quote the *Salisbury Carolinian:*

"Heretofore the tide of emigration from this State to the West and Southwest has been periodical, but now it has become constant and flows with increasing magnitude. This is probably owing to the extreme scarcity of grain which causes so many to break off before the fall."[36]

Emigration was checked by the panic of 1837, and there was no further pronounced movement of population until about 1843.[37] The resumption of emigration, about 1843, was due to the low price of cotton and the attractive land values in Alabama and Mississippi. As a result of the panic, there was a tremendous decline in land values, particularly in the Southwest where speculation had been rife. The editor of the Sumter County *Alabama Whig,* eager to see a resumption of emigration

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[34] Reprinted from the *Tarboro Southerner* in the *Standard* of Feb. 9, 1853. There is a similar account in the *Standard* of Feb. 11, 1846 of a schooner bound for Matagorda, Texas, with 88 passengers, 46 whites and 42 blacks. The emigrants were from the counties of Nash and Edgecombe.

[35] *Raleigh Register,* March 11, 1834.

[36] Reprinted in the *Fayetteville Observer,* June 3, 1836.

[37] For the effect of the panic of 1837 on the planters of Alabama see J. G. Baldwin, *Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi.*

to Alabama, wrote in 1842 that improved lands could be bought for lower prices than the same lands could have been bought in 1840 in the woods.[38] With the return to normal conditions after the panic, the drain of population was resumed; and it continued, with some retardation during the 'fifties, until the outbreak of the Civil War.[39]

The transportation of slaves to the Lower South by professional and amateur traders presents many interesting features. As to the volume of the domestic slave trade between North Carolina and the Lower South, no definite estimate, with any approach to accuracy, can be made. It was, however, comparatively small, and mostly, if not entirely, in the hands of individuals instead of business organizations. There were no slave pens in the State where slaves were assembled for transportation, like those maintained at Fredericksburg and Alexandria. It appears that, during the 'thirties, slaves were assembled at Fayetteville for transportation to the Lower South; but these were handled by individual traders.[40] There were numerous slave dealers; but only a few of them made use of the public prints to advertise their business, for the reason that trafficking in slaves was somewhat in disrepute. The journeys of slave dealers in and out of the State excited little comment and inspired very few writers to chronicle any data. As a rule, slave dealers trading to the Southwest advertised for and purchased slaves "in the prime of life"—those who were able to stand long journeys afoot and command the highest prices.[41] The following advertisement is somewhat typical:

[38] Reprinted in the *Standard,* Nov. 23, 1842.

[39] L. O'B. Branch stated, in 1852, that emigration to the Southwest from Virginia and Maryland had ceased, and that the tide of emigration from North Carolina had been checked. Branch was a native of Halifax County, a member of Congress, and a Brigadier-General of the Confederacy.

[40] The following advertisement appeared from time to time in the *Fayetteville Observer* in the 'thirties: "I will give the highest cash price for likely young negroes, say from 10 to 25 years of age. Fellows would be preferred with proper certificate for the New Orleans market. Lewis Thomas."

[41] Slaves of tender years were hauled in wagons. See Andrews, *Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade,* p. 149.

"Negroes Wanted"

"The subscriber is desirous to purchase 30 to 40 negroes of both sexes, not under ten nor over thirty years of age, for which the highest cash prices will be given."[42]

The selective character of the slave trade deprived the State of a portion of her most vigorous and capable class of labor. In this connection, there arose the accusation that slaves were bred for market.[43] Evidence of the systematic breeding of slaves for the market is not convincing; although it is probable that slaveowners were not adverse to the rapid increase of their slaves so long as the demand for slave labor gave to that species of property an increasing value.

Speculation in slaves was attended by some risk; so the slave trader, in order to avoid the expense of feeding and clothing slaves over a long period, and to obviate the risk of selling on a falling market, made rapid trips through the country, rounded up his slaves, and set out for Richmond or the Southwest to dispose of his property.[44] One could afford to take a few slaves to Richmond; but the cost of transportation to the Southwest, coupled with the risks incurred in making the journey, necessitated the assembling of rather large groups in order to make the venture profitable. It was asserted by a writer, who subscribed himself "Little Farmer," that eight weeks were required for the overland journey from North Carolina to Mississippi, and that the expense of the trip was approximately $28.00 per negro.[45] Despite the expense of the journey and the losses sustained through death and the absconding of slaves en route, the trade was prosecuted at times on a large scale. For example, in 1837 or thereabouts A. H. Arrington of Nash County took to Alabama a lot of slaves which he sold to Charles J. Gee for $24,000.[46]

[42] *Fayetteville Observer*, Jan. 13, 1835.

[43] See Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, p. 263.

[44] Richmond was a local market for North Carolina slave dealers.

[45] *Arator*, March, 1857.

[46] *North Carolina Reports*, 5 Iredell, 590. This sale was given publicity through a lawsuit growing out of the terms of the sale. In this connection, Professor Hedrick's statement on p. 53 is of interest.

An examination of the Census Reports from 1790 to 1860, with reference to the gain and loss of white and slave populations for certain typical eastern counties,[47] will help to establish some generalizations as to the duration and extent of the migration to the Southwest. The counties of Halifax, Bertie, Granville, Cumberland, and Washington have been selected, because in those counties there were heavy slave populations, and to a large degree stability of industry:

BERTIE COUNTY

Year	*Whites*	*Slaves*
1790	7117	5141
1800	5534	5512
1810	5145	6059
1820	4818	5725
1830	5303	6792
1840	5144	12175
1850	5335	7194
1860	5806	8185

HALIFAX COUNTY

Year	*Whites*	*Slaves*
1790	7016	6506
1800	6071	7239
1810	7760	6624
1820	6361	9450
1830	5870	9790
1840	5623	16865
1850	5765	8954
1860	6641	10349

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Year	*Whites*	*Slaves*
1790		
1800	1598	76
1810	2114	1287
1820	2297	1667
1830	2713	1712
1840	2639	4525
1850	3209	2215
1860	3593	2465

CUMBERLAND COUNTY[48]

Year	*Whites*	*Slaves*
1790	6407	2181
1800		
1810	6422	2723
1820	9562	4751

[47] Since the western counties were frequently subdivided, a comparison of the growth of white and slave populations in those counties is not feasible.

[48] Cumberland was a naval stores-producing county.

Year	*Whites*	*Slaves*
1830	9081	5047
1840	9030	15284
1850	12447	7217
1860	9554	5830

GRANVILLE COUNTY[49]

Year	*Whites*	*Slaves*
1790	6504	4163
1800	7580	6106
1810	7363	7746
1820	8846	9071
1830	9438	9154
1840	9309	8707
1850	10294	9865
1860	11187	11086

Broadly speaking, there was in the East a fairly uniform increase of slave population until about 1830, and in a great many eastern counties there was an increase of slave population from 1830 to 1840. On the contrary, the white population of the East registered no marked increase in this decade; in fact, a few eastern counties sustained a loss of white population. But, from 1840 to 1860, there was a decline in the slave population of the East and a slight increase of white population. In this period Halifax suffered a loss of 6516 slaves and gained 1018 whites; Bertie lost 3990 slaves and gained 662 whites; Cumberland lost 9454 slaves and gained 524 whites; Washington lost 2060 slaves and gained 1128 whites; while Granville and Guilford, the latter a western county, show a gain of both slaves and whites. Edgecombe, an exception for an eastern county, shows a loss of white and a gain of slave population.[50] From the figures cited, it seems reasonable to infer that the decade 1840-1850 witnessed the heaviest movement of slaves from the plantation districts of the East; and, further, that the emigration of slaves, heavy during the 'forties, was retarded somewhat during the 'fifties. Taking the State as a whole, it is probable that the greatest exodus of slaves took place between 1830 and 1840, for during that decade the total slave population increased only .08%. Considering that four

[49] Granville was a tobacco-producing county.

[50] Edgecombe was rated as a progressive county in the two decades immediately preceding the Civil War.

of the five eastern counties cited in the above tables show increases of slaves between 1830 and 1840, it appears that the West contributed heavily to the tide of emigration in the 'thirties. This view appears all the more probable when one considers that, due to the failure of the legislature to inaugurate a comprehensive scheme of internal improvements, there was, in the early 'thirties, a great deal of discontent in the West.[51]

From 1840 to 1860 the percentage of increase of slaves and whites was greater in the West than in the East. Drawing an arbitrary line between the counties of Granville, Wake, Harnett, Cumberland, and Robeson on the east; and Person, Orange, Chatham, Moore, and Richmond on the west, we find that west of the line there were 85,021 slaves in 1840 and 115,101 in 1860. East of this line there were 160,796 slaves in 1840 and 215,958 in 1860; thus making the percentage of increase in the West during the twenty year period 35.40, and the percentage of increase in the East 34.3. The white population during the same time shows an increase of 32.3% in the West and an increase of 26.4% in the East. Due largely to the extension of cotton culture into the piedmont, there was, prior to about 1830, a considerable transfer of slaves within the State from east to west.[52] After 1840, however, and perhaps earlier, there was no general movement of slaves from one section to another within the State; hence, one may reasonably infer that the old settled districts of the East lost more people of both races by emigration during the last two decades of the slave régime.

Any estimate of the number of slaves removed from North Carolina must necessarily be questionable. Perhaps, the most reliable method of making an estimate is to take a certain decade as a base and compute the growth of population on the basis of the rate of increase for the decade selected. Assuming the rate of increase of the slave population to have been constant, let us take the decade 1800-1810 as a base. The rate

[51] Boyd, *History of North Carolina*, II, 99.

[52] "Estimates of the Value of Slaves, 1815," *American Historical Review*, XIX, 815-825.

of increase in that decade was 26.65%, and had that rate been maintained, there would have been 550,119 slaves in the State in 1860; whereas the census for 1860 gives only 331,059. On the basis of this reckoning, the State lost on an average of 4381 slaves per year for the fifty year period. If on the other hand, we take the decade 1810-1820 as a base, the rate of increase being 21.43%, there would have been 445,751 slaves in the State in 1860. On the basis of the latter reckoning, the State lost on an average 2867 slaves per year from 1820 to 1860.[53] In the absence of a market to the southward, it is hardly fair to assume that the ratio of increase of the slave population would have remained approximately constant, for in that event there would have been a tendency to glut the labor market; but, when there was with some interruption a southern slave market, the propagation of slaves went on apace, and the rate of natural increase probably remained approximately constant.

What were some of the most patent results of the removal of slaves and whites from North Carolina? In the first place, the migration to the Southwest served to reduce the price of land and to increase the price of slaves. In the Treasurer's Report for 1834,[54] it is stated as a fact worth noting that the revenue from land had been gradually diminishing for every successive year since 1820, when the prevailing rate of taxation was adopted. According to this report, the average valuation of land per acre in 1815, for purposes of taxation, was $2.69; but, by 1833, the average valuation had declined to $2.27 per acre. Despite the fact that about a million and a quarter acres of land had been entered for taxation since 1815, the total acreage listed for taxation in 1833 was less than that for 1815. This condition, the Treasurer claimed, was not due entirely to the system of taxation. The most active causes for the decline in land values were the impoverishment of the soil, the greatly reduced demand for land, and the withdrawal from the State

[53] It was estimated that in 1831 Virginia was sending annually about 6000 slaves to the other Southern States. Ballagh, *History of Slavery in Virginia*, p. 25.

[54] MS. in Legislative Papers, 1834.

of much of its labor. If it be true that approximately nine-tenths of the farm lands were in the market in 1833,[55] such a condition necessarily made for cheap land; but, since slaves were movable property, their market value was not sensibly affected by the price of land. There was, accordingly, a wide discrepancy in the price of slaves and land. In regard to the increased price of slaves, a former merchant of Plymouth, N. C., residing in 1833 as a planter in the Red River Valley, reminded his North Carolina friends in an open letter that the sugar and cotton growing states served to keep up the price of slaves in North Carolina, "and without saying what is the value of the species of property here, I venture to say it is more than will cost to bring it to Louisiana."[56] Following the lead of the New Orleans market, the price of prime field hands in Virginia rose from $500 in 1843 to $1200 in 1860;[57] and there was, unquestionably, a corresponding rise in the price of slaves in North Carolina. Under these conditions, the cost of equipping a plantation in North Carolina increased, while the returns from the land remained practically constant or, perhaps, in some instances diminished. A Roanoke River planter remarked in 1859 that his land needed more laborers, but at present prices he could not afford to buy them, nor could any prudent farmer in the old states. "What then? Why, away they go to the sugar and cotton lands of the South. It matters but little how much higher prices will get, even at present Virginia at least will be drained time enough."[58]

In the second place, the removal of slaves and whites resulted in bringing about a condition of economic inertia. The almost constant drain on the wealth of the State practically killed the spirit of enterprise. There was not much disposition to indorse increased taxation for internal improvements on the part of those left behind to cultivate land whose value was depreciating and whose productivity was declining. The sight

[55] See ante, p. 54.

[56] *Fayetteville Observer*, June 18, 1833.

[57] See chart of slave prices in Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 370.

[58] *Standard*, Oct. 12, 1859.

of North Carolina's "wasted fields, her deserted farms, her ruined towns, and her departing sons"[59] lent weight to the charge of L. O'B. Branch that the proprietors of the South Atlantic States had cultivated their lands wastefully and excused themselves on the ground that their children would find a new home in the South and West "where the government was constantly acquiring whole empires and offering the soil at prices almost nominal."[60] Certainly, there existed the feeling that it was not worth while to make sacrifices for the purpose of making the State a better place in which to live. Sensible of this feeling, Archibald D. Murphey wrote in 1819: "Those who labor now will meet with nothing but vexation, chagrin, and disgust. Another generation will profit by their labors. The spirit of the present is radically mean and grovelling."[61]

It cannot be denied, viewed from the standpoint of the individual, that the removal of slaveowners with slaves was, as a rule, advantageous; neither can it be denied that the domestic slave trade put thousands of dollars into the pockets of slaveowners and speculators; but, in both instances, the State was the loser. In the first instance, the State lost capital, labor, and directive ability without any commensurate compensation; and in the second instance, it lost labor and received in return money, which, instead of being invested in industrial enterprises from which society might have benefitted, served, for the most part, to meet deficits of the individuals making the sale.[62] Since the popular movement to the Southwest was greatly facilitated by reason of the ability of emigrants to carry with them a supply of labor which they were sure of retaining in the new country, it is hardly probable that the State would have lost so large a percentage of its labor and capital had a system of free, instead of slave, labor prevailed. Free labor would have been less mobile and more uncertain.

[59] *Fayetteville Observer,* Dec. 17, 1833. Conditions were not so bad as here represented.

[60] *Standard,* Feb. 25, 1852.

[61] *Murphey Papers,* I, 151.

[62] An article on "The Effects of the High Price of Slaves," by Edmund Ruffin in *De Bow's Review,* XXVI, 653 ff., is worth while in this connection.

CHAPTER V

Sales and Hire of Slaves

Slaves were chattels as well as persons, and as such they were sold publicly and privately for cash or on credit. Transfer of title was effected by a bill of sale witnessed by one or more persons.[1] While there was some variation in the form and phrasing of bills, the following is typical:

"Know all by these presents that I, William Page of the County of Wake and State of North Carolina, have bargained and sold to Robert Love of the County of Chatham and State of North Carolina a certain negro boy, Joseph, for the sum of $1,200 to me in hand paid; and by these presents do bargain and sell unto the said Love which I the said Page warrant and defend the title of said negro to the said Love to him, his heirs forevermore. I the said Page do transfer all the title invested in me and my heirs to the said negro to the said Love and his administrators and executors forever. In witness I have set my hand and seal this 30th of Oct. 1862."[2]

The indiscriminate sale of slaves did not receive the approval of the best element of slaveowners, and the sale of slaves for purely speculative purposes was openly criticized. Slaves were sold under various circumstances, among others: under execution to satisfy creditors, by an administrator in the settlement of an estate, on account of unruly conduct, and in order to relieve financial embarrassment. The sale of a slave who habitually ran away from his master, was intractable, or threatened the personal security of his master or master's family, generally met with the approval of society. In this regard the County Court of Nash County is on record:

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[1] The law required that bills of sale be registered in the county where the owner of the slave or slaves resided. *Revisal* of 1821, p. 685. On account of the negligence of people in registering bills of sale the legislature from time to time extended the time limit for registration.

[2] Bill of sale in office of Register of Deeds of Wake County.

"It appearing to the satisfaction of the Court that a negro slave named Alfred belonging to John W. Drake, a minor, is of such general bad character and unmanageable as to be of little or no benefit, in consequence of which is in danger of being greatly injured or killed. It is therefore ordered that Nicholas W. Arrington, guardian for the said John W. Drake be and is hereby authorized and ordered to sell said slave Alfred to the best advantage for the benefit of his ward."[3]

The better class of slaveowners were reluctant to sell their desirable slaves although they realized that conditions made it unprofitable to retain them. Archibald D. Murphey wrote, "I do not know whether I can get along without selling any more of my slaves. I have about sixty remaining, a greater number than render me service or than I can well manage. But although others treat their negroes as well or perhaps better than I do, mine are attached to me, and I did not know until the time came what pain it would give me to sell them."[4] Not infrequently, planters refused to sell slaves when their retention was no longer profitable, because they wished to bestow them on their sons and daughters at marriage. In this way slaves were kept within the family circle and family pride vindicated. The plantation book of J. Devereux shows that from 1847 to 1860, out of a total of 240 slaves, whose names are recorded, only ten were sold.

Few humanitarian safeguards were thrown around the sale of slaves seized for debt. The law provided that when a sheriff or constable sold such slaves, they should be sold at the County Court House "of their respective counties on the last Thursday of each and every month in each and every year." This particular Thursday was known as "sale day." The law required twenty days notice of the public sale of such slaves and further specified that the sale should take place between the hours of ten and four.[5] In many counties there was objection to designating the time and place for the official

[3] County Court Records of Nash County, 1840.

[4] *Murphey Papers*, I, 158.

[5] *Revisal* of 1821, p. 1540.

sale of slaves, on the ground that they did not sell for their full value on "sale day." In 1822, a petition, signed by more than 200 citizens of Camden County, protesting against prescribing the manner and place of sale of land and slaves under execution, was presented to the legislature. The petitioners alleged that on "sale day" slaves and land sold for only about one-half or two-thirds their value.[6] In the same year the counties of Warren, Currituck, Carteret, and Tyrrell secured exemption from the operation of the objectionable law;[7] and in those counties, to which others were added in 1823, the sale of slaves under execution was authorized to be held at the county court house on the same Monday in each month. The Monday of the County Court was selected as the sale day in order to assure the presence of a large crowd.

Because it was thought that they sold better singly, the Supreme Court did not favor the official sale of slaves in large numbers. In the case of Cannon v. Jenkins et al., Judge Ruffin, in rendering the decision of the court, said, "In sales of executors it is the duty of the executor to get as much as he can," even if the interest of the estate required that families be separated; nevertheless, the court held that an executor would not be punished "for acting on the common sympathies of our nature, unless in so doing he was plainly injuring those with whose interests he stood charged."[8] Notwithstanding the financial loss which might result from such an arrangement, slaveowners sometimes ordered that their slaves be sold in families. R. H. Mosby of Halifax County, in advertising the sale of his slaves, stated that they were to be sold in families, "as I am not disposed to violate the laws of humanity by selling or separating children from their parents."[9] A notice of the sale of 300 negroes, the property of T. P. Devereux, contained the announcement that they were to be sold in families;[10]

[6] MS. in Legislative Papers, 1822.

[7] Sess. Laws, 1822, ch. 25.

[8] *N. C. Reports,* 1 Dev. Equity, 422.

[9] *Raleigh Register,* Aug. 12, 1848.

[10] *Standard,* Sept. 20, 1856.

and at a sale of sixty-nine negroes, belonging to Major N. T. Green of Warren County, they were sold in families of two, three, four, five, and as high as six.[11] Married slaves were often preferred by purchasers to single ones, as married couples were not so liable to become discontented in their new environment;[12] but, when a slave family was large, purchasers who would pay an acceptable price for the entire family group could not always be found. So marked was the difficulty of retaining and managing single slaves detached by sale from the original family group, that a purchaser sometimes questioned a slave as to his willingness to live with him—a practice which the editor of the *Farmers' Journal* condemned as subversive of discipline.[13]

Other conditions being equal, slaves brought up in some special trade sold for higher prices than the common field hands. Negro coopers, blacksmiths, cooks, and carpenters were especially prized and sold for fancy prices. It was reported that, at the sale of the property of Hon. Richard Hines of Edgecombe County, negro mechanics sold for from $1100 to $1500, while common field hands were sold at bids proportionately high.[14] When the sale of a lot of slaves was pending the artisans among them received special mention. Notice of sale of the estate of Colonel Swann,[15] for example, called attention to the presence among his slaves of eight country-born negroes, among them an excellent cooper, a carpenter, and two women who were prime hands in the field or in the house. In addition, there was a negro man, about sixty, accustomed to handling turpentine.[16] The price of a slave, man or woman, depended largely on the age, disposition, ability, and physical condition of the individual; and, to some extent, on

[11] *Ibid.*, April 11, 1855.

[12] Andrews, *Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade*, p. 139.

[13] *Farmers' Journal*, May, 1853.

[14] *Standard*, Jan. 21, 1852.

[15] Probably Col. Samuel Swann, prominent lawyer and legislator of the Cape Fear Section.

[16] Hall's *Wilmington Gazette*, Nov. 3, 1797.

the price of cotton and tobacco. Prime field hands of ages ranging from about sixteen to thirty years were, as a class, in the largest demand; and the selling price of this class of labor supplied something of a basis for determining the selling price of other grades of unskilled labor. In general, female slaves ranged about one-third lower in price than males. Boys and girls[17] in their teens brought prices about two-thirds as high as prime men and women respectively, for their longer expectation of working life offset in considerable degree their lower current productiveness.[18] At a sale of slaves near Salisbury in 1835, the following prices were realized:[19]

MALES

1 age 7 sold for	$203 cash
1 age 7 sold for	311
1 age 8 sold for	353
1 age 9 sold for	415
1 age 11 sold for	585
1 age 12 sold for	650
1 age 14 sold for	571
1 age 16 sold for	633
1 age 17 sold for	725
1 age 18 sold for	622 cash
1 age 19 sold for	747
1 age 20 sold for	850
1 age 22 sold for	835
1 age 34 sold for	801.50

FEMALES

1 age 7 sold for	262
1 age 9 sold for	363
1 age 12 sold for	451
1 age 14 sold for	272
1 age 15 sold for	450
1 age 17 sold for	551
1 age 38 sold for	387

In Person County, a lot of slaves sold in 1858 as follows:[20]

1 man servant, age 34, sold for	$1100
1 man servant, sold for	1380
1 boy (unsound) age 18, sold for	1280

[17] Negro girls who gave promise of being prolific were in the greatest demand.

[18] See "Documents—Estimates of the Value of Slaves, 1815," *American Historical Review*, XIX, 818-824. For the general scale of slave prices consult Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 370-378.

[19] *Fayetteville Observer*, Jan. 27, 1835. All but two were sold on a credit of twelve months.

[20] *Raleigh Register*, Dec. 8, 1858.

1 boy (a mere scrub), sold for	$ 510
1 woman and infant, sold for	1500
1 woman sold for	1295
1 girl age 14, sold for	1031
1 small boy, sold for	849
1 old man, head snow white, sold for	600

At a sale of slaves, all common field hands, in Northampton County in 1859, the following prices were obtained:[21]

Bob age 23, sold for	$1480
Silas age 52 (infirm), sold for	405
Peter age 18, sold for	1460
Allen age 14, sold for	1260
Emily age 19 and infant, sold for	1410
Julia and two small children sold for	1580
Ara age 50, sold for	340

During the 'fifties, the price of slaves reached unprecedented levels which were maintained until the outset of the Civil War.[22] On October 10, 1860, or thereabouts, a lot of seventeen slaves in Wake County sold at an average price of $768; and one of the lot, a negro man, age nineteen, sold for $1410. In November following, however, the editor of the *Raleigh Register,* alarmed at South Carolina's threat of secession, stated that South Carolina's movements were well calculated to impair materially the value of slaves in North Carolina and Virginia, and predicted that South Carolinians and planters from the Lower South would soon be buying slaves in North Carolina and Virginia at reduced prices.[23]

The practice of hiring out slaves was practically coeval with the establishment of slavery in the State; but, due to the increase of slaves and the development of various industries on a comparatively large scale, it came to be a more common practice in the nineteenth century. Slaves were not only hired out, but in some instances they were permitted to hire their own time and travel from place to place, working at some trade

[21] *Standard,* April 20, 1859. The prices of slaves quoted above may be slightly above the average, since they were printed as news items.

[22] The author was informed by Mr. Billie Drake, of Nash County, that on the day of his enlistment in the Confederate Army, in 1861, he was offered $1500 for a young mulatto man.

[23] *Raleigh Register,* Nov. 21, 1860.

in which they were proficient. The practice of hiring a slave his time was forbidden by law,[24] and, as a rule, condemned by society; although in isolated cases it was connived at by the community group familiar with the parties. For example, in 1859, Reuben, a shoemaker, belonging to James F. Clark of Beaufort County, agreed to pay his master $150 a year for the privilege of working in town on his own time, and one John Blount stood bond for the payment of the same.[25]

Objections to hiring slaves their time were numerous. In the first place, it was said that slaves in a state of semi-freedom were under no effective control, and hence acquired irregular habits, thereby setting a bad example for slaves under close supervision. In the second place, it was claimed that slaves took advantage of their liberty to foment conspiracies and insurrections. Finally, the hiring to a slave his time was sometimes the preliminary step to complete emancipation.[26] Emancipation resulted from a tacit or expressed understanding between the master and slave to the effect that the slave, in addition to paying the master a stipulated sum of money each year, could, by earning additional money, eventually purchase his freedom. Slaves who obtained the privilege of hiring their time were usually artisans of recognized ability whose services were in demand in the community and neighboring towns.[27] It was so common, in fact, for negro artisans to drift into the towns, that in some instances they encroached on the business of the resident artisans. In 1835, the city of Wilmington, a victim of this condition, secured the passage of an act which taxed slaveowners who permitted their slaves to hire their time and live in the city, an amount not exceeding four dollars per year.[28]

[24] See *Revisal* of 1821, pp. 740-741.

[25] Clark Plantation Book.

[26] Henry, *The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina,* pp. 97-98.

[27] For examples of such cases, see Taylor, "The Free Negro in North Carolina." *James Sprunt Historical Publications,* XVII, no. 1, p. 13.

[28] MS. in Legislative Papers, 1835. The act did not apply to slaves of resident owners.

were not so liable to be injured by overwork. Another advantage in allowing artisans to serve others was derived from the fact that they worked, for the most part, by the day or month instead of by the year—a practice which enabled their owners to make use of their services when required. On June 27, 1845, Mr. Clark's negro carpenter, Prince, was hired out at $15 per month; in September, 1846, at $18 per month; and in May, 1847, at $20 per month.[37] Negro ditchers and well-diggers worked by the day in the vicinity of their master's plantation, to which they returned at night or for week-ends. In this manner, the master never relinquished complete control over his itinerant servants.

Corporations, as well as individuals, hired slaves; but, as a rule, those hired by individuals were better treated. On the plantations there was less likelihood of overwork and deterioration of morals than in the case of slaves working for railway or mining companies under strange overseers, alongside slaves, free negroes, and whites from different parts of the country. So great was the danger of injury to slaves employed by corporations, that railroad companies were required to give bond for the proper care of slaves.[38]

The scale of wages depended on many factors, notably: the skill of the workmen, the class of work, the demand for labor, and the state of industry. Relative to the difference, in the wages of artisans and ordinary hands, Olmsted asserted that the wages of ordinary practiced turpentine hands (slaves) were about $120 per year, while a negro cooper received from $150 to $200 per year.[39] In 1847, James F. Clark hired out his negro carpenter, Prince, for $240 per year, and at the same time he hired out seven field hands to Dave W. Jordan for $95 per year for each hand.[40] Again, conditions of industry and finance exerted a direct influence on the wage scale. For ex-

[37] Clark Plantation Book.

[38] *Raleigh Register,* Dec. 8, 1841.

[39] Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States,* p. 340.

[40] Clark Plantation Book.

ample, Mr. Clark was unable to hire out his negroes for as much money in 1857, a year of financial stringency, as in 1856. In 1852, the *Standard* carried the following comment on the labor situation: "Negroes were hired here on Tuesday last at 25% upon former prices. This is owing in the first place to the increased demand for labor occasioned by the building of the North Carolina railroad and the river improvements;[41] and secondly, to the abundance of money. Such prices cannot be permanent."[42] Notwithstanding this statement, negro men for ordinary farm and railroad work hired in Raleigh at a public hiring in 1860 for from $100 to $125 per year. Good cooks hired for $75 and $100, house servants from $60 to $80, and turpentine hands from $160 to $175 per year.[43] On the whole, there was a sharp rise in the wages of slaves toward the close of the slavery period. The Clark Plantation Book contains a record of the hiring of practically the same group of slaves over a period of thirteen years, 1847 to 1860.[44] A comparison of the wages received for the services of these slaves over a number of consecutive years will illustrate the upward trend in the price of slave labor:

Year	*Number of hands hired out*	*Average annual wage per hand*
1847	7	$ 95.00
1849	6	95.00
1850	7	105.00
1851	7	113.56
1852	10	128.00
1853	2	125.00
1854	10	205.00
1856	10	200.00
1857	10	180.00
1858	10	180.00
1859	10	225.00
1860	9	250.00
1861	2	225.00

[41] Alexander Murchison sought to purchase 50 negroes and to hire 200 to be employed on the works of the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Co. Advertisement in the *Standard* of Jan. 6, 1855.

[42] *Standard*, Jan. 3, 1852.

[43] *Standard*, Jan. 11, 1860.

[44] See ante, p. 77.

In areas of staple production the wages of slave labor appear to have been as high as the wages of white labor. Hinton R. Helper stated that slave labor was better paid than free labor for farm work. "White hands," he said, "between the ages of twenty and forty received $84 per year including board," while negro men were hired out on adjoining farms at an average of about $115 per year.[45]

It is, perhaps, true that the ordinary white farm laborer was no more efficient than the average slave of like occupation. In the turpentine belt free white labor was regarded as being somewhat more efficient, but less manageable, than slave labor;[46] but on the farms and plantations slave labor enjoyed certain advantages. In the first place, the large plantations were, in some respects, industrial schools where slaves were taught to become proficient in various classes of routine labor; while the "poor whites" acquired whatever skill they possessed in a less systematic and less satisfactory manner. In the second place, slaves could be driven to almost any task; but the independent white laborer was less amenable to control.[47] Doubtless, in industry requiring initiative and technique, white labor was preferred, where it was available; for, aside from the matter of initiative, skilled labor did not require the presence of an overseer. In the piedmont in 1852 it was reported that the labor of either a free man or slave, including board and clothing, could be had for from $110 to $120 per year;[48] however, in areas of staple crops white laborers were too few to produce keen competition. Accordingly, the price of slave labor governed largely the price of white labor, and the whites were thus left to bear the burden of competition.

[45] H. R. Helper, *Impending Crisis*, pp. 380-381. Helper's observations on the comparative wages paid to free and slave labor were made in the middle 'fifties.

[46] Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 350.

[47] Governor Hammond of South Carolina estimated that 50,000 out of 300,000 whites in South Carolina were languishing for want of employment because they could not compete with slave labor in agriculture. Schafer, "Sectionalism in South Carolina," American Historical Association, *Reports*, 1900, I, 394.

[48] De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, II, p. 178.

CHAPTER VI

Plantation Economy

The comparative lack of concentrated wealth in North Carolina caused the plantation régime to be generally on a small scale, and the control of slaves to be accordingly informal.[1]

On every well-ordered plantation certain buildings, in addition to the dwelling of the proprietor, such as the stables, porkhouse, storehouse, dairy, granary, and tobacco barns in the tobacco zone, were practically indispensable. Other buildings, such as a ginhouse, icehouse, loomhouse, carpenter's shop and mill, were convenient and perhaps necessary on the larger plantations, but on the smaller estates they were frequently absent. The small planter did not produce enough cotton to justify him in erecting a ginhouse and in installing a cotton gin for his individual use; and the erection of carpenter and blacksmith shops depended largely on whether the small proprietors owned slaves skilled in carpentry and the work of the forge. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the proprietor of an estate of 800 acres on a branch of the Catawba River had in his yard a sawmill, a tanmill, a distillery for making brandy, and a small forge for horseshoeing. Seven or eight slaves were employed in the different departments at certain periods of the year.[2]

The negro cabins, usually about eighteen by twenty feet, were constructed of oak or pine logs hewn on the sides and notched at the ends. The interstices between the logs were filled with splints of wood and daubed with mud made of red or white clay.[3] The chimneys were constructed of rock or, more commonly, of sticks and mud, and the roofs of the cabins were covered with pine slabs. Most of the cabins contained lofts which provided sleeping quarters for the younger mem-

[1] Olmsted, *A Journey through the Seaboard States,* p. 408.

[2] F. A. Michaux, "Travels," in R. G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels,* III, 292.

[3] The negro cabins in Edgecombe County in 1810 were without floors. MS. in the Henderson Letter Book.

bers of the family. A huge fireplace in each cabin served for both cooking and heating purposes, while a single door and window generally served for purposes of lighting and ventilation. The furniture of the cabins was scant and simple, ordinarily consisting of one or more bedsteads with mattresses stuffed with straw, a chest, some chairs, and a table. Most of the articles of furniture were home-made or those discarded by the proprietor's family, and the whole outfit represented but a small outlay in cash.

As a rule, an overseer was employed on the larger estates and on estates where the landlord was an absentee. Legally, the overseer sustained the same relation to the slaves as did the master.[4] Since their reputations for efficiency rested largely on the number of bales of cotton and the number of barrels of corn produced in a year with a given number of hands, overseers as a class were severe taskmasters.[5] In this regard, the statement of Judge Ruffin's overseer is interesting: "The best painter," wrote Judge Ruffin's son, "could not depict, nor the most skillful statuary carve a face more indicative of grief and despair than in his when one engages in conversation with him upon the weather, and the state of the farm. With all his industry and attention he has been able to do but little."[6] Proprietors were interested in securing overseers who were good managers and good farmers, but they were also interested in protecting their slaves from brutal punishment and overwork.[7] The following advertisement gives one some idea of the combination of qualities it was desired that an overseer should possess: ". . . . no person need apply unless he can bring with him recommendations from respectable planters certifying that he understands cropping and the management of slaves, and likewise that he bears the character of being an honest, industrious, and sober man."[8] An overseer's duties

[4] See Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 228 ff.

[5] Olmsted, *A Journey in the Back Country*, p. 57.

[6] *Ruffin Papers*, II, 25.

[7] See article on "Overseers" in the *Southern Planter*, July 1858.

[8] Advertisement for overseer by Richard Dobbs Spaight in the *New Bern Gazette*, Nov. 14, 1793.

and responsibilities were manifold. Subject to instructions from his employer, he was, in general, expected to direct the work of the negroes, and to see that plantation affairs were well-ordered. He was to observe the conduct of the slaves on all occasions, punish the refractory, and look after the well-being of all. In addition, the care of the stock and plantation equipment came within his special province.[9]

It was customary in some quarters to give overseers a share in the crop in part or whole payment for their services. Such an arrangement was designed to give them a personal interest in the crop. Archibald D. Murphey wished to hire two overseers in 1815, one of whom he desired to engage on shares, and the other either on shares or for a stated salary.[10] While the employment of an overseer "on shares" might insure a larger immediate return, the practice was criticised on the ground that it was rapidly producing general deterioration of the soil.[11]

The management of labor was further facilitated by the use of negro "drivers" or foremen. They were selected on the score of reliability and capability, and were employed on both large and small estates to lead the workers in the fields, to see to the prompt turning out of the hands in the early morning, and to report any misconduct or dereliction on the part of the slaves in the absence of the proprietor or overseer.[12] A negro driver supplemented the work of, and sometimes acted as substitute for, the proprietor on the small establishments. But, as a rule, the proprietors of small estates did their own overseeing and frequently worked with their slaves in the fields.

With the view of rendering slaves more content and tractable, and in order to encourage habits of thrift, many planters thought it expedient to give to their slaves, who desired it, bits of land on which they cultivated small crops in their spare time. The resulting produce was purchased by the owner of the slaves at the market price, and the money was then turned

[9] For the duties of overseers, see Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 261 ff.

[10] *Murphey Papers*, I, 83.

[11] *Farmers' Own Book*, p. 21.

[12] Henry, *The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina*, p. 27.

over to the slaves who were permitted to spend it for articles of personal adornment.[13] "A quasi holding of property by negroes," said Edmund Taylor, "tends to make them industrious and respectable, adds materially to their comfort, and keeps them from wandering about on holidays and at unseasonable hours of the night."[14] Some slaveowners rewarded industrious and well-behaved slaves by distributing gifts, usually at Christmas or the first of January. For example, on January 1, 1817, Ebenezer Pettigrew made the following entry in his account book with his negroes: "Settled with Tom, George, Cromwell, and Lewis for their ditching in the nine feet ditch. The settlement is nothing more or [*sic*] less than presents for their good behaviour while working in it."[15]

Ebenezer Pettigrew kept accounts with his negro men. From his store he sold them food and clothing on occasion throughout the year, and in the fall he purchased the corn they made on their individual plots of ground and credited their accounts with the proceeds. For instance, in 1822, he sold to John eight pounds of tobacco, one-half gallon of molasses, one chest lock, and one-half bushel of potatoes, and purchased from John two barrels and two bushels of corn. Ordinarily, his negroes failed to make enough corn to pay for the articles with which they were charged and, consequently, the balance on account was carried over from year to year, with the result that that negroes seldom received any actual cash. By flagrant misconduct Pettigrew's slaves would forfeit their entire corn crop. In 1828, James was credited with ten bushels of corn at thirty-six cents per bushel, but the corn was forfeited to his master for stealing.[16] In 1829, Sam made no purchases and raised a crop of corn valued at $4.71; however, this was forfeited for running away and for other "outrageous conduct." John was charged with three stolen watermelons valued at fifty cents,

[13] Margaret Devereux, *Plantation Sketches,* p. 37.

[14] Prize essay on plantation management in *The Southern Planter,* March, 1861

[15] MS. in the Pettigrew Papers. The Pettigrew plantation was situated on the Scuppernong River in Washington County.

[16] "Account Book with the Negroes," MS. in the Pettigrew Papers.

and a broken spade valued at $2.00.[17] This particular slaveowner had a twofold purpose in view in keeping accounts with his negroes. In the first place, the scheme was used as an aid to discipline; and, in the second place, the hope of receiving a sum of money at the close of the year undoubtedly operated to make the slaves live frugally, with a resultant reduction of plantation expenses.[18]

Both large and small planters experienced difficulty in determining the correct proportion of hands to horses and of hands and horses to land; and as a result, the estates of slaveowners often approached the point of diminishing returns before the owners were aware of it. Under the slaveholding régime there was, under ordinary circumstances, a tendency for the population on a given plantation to encroach on the land. Slaveowners who entertained scruples against selling slaves sometimes allowed their plantations to become stocked with surplus labor, and, consequently, faced from year to year an increasing deficit. On the contrary, some slaveowners owned too much land for their working force. A slaveowner, writing for the *Farmers' Journal* from Tarborough in 1852, stated: "But, Sir, I am like most of farmers, I own too much land for my force. I have at least 1100 acres of cleared land now under fence and I cannot tend more than one-third of it, and that is not tilled in the way I wish."[19] He further stated that he worked thirty hands, seven of them men and the rest women. On the plantation called "Panola" in Edgecombe County, the proprietor, John S. Dancy, stated that he worked thirty-four hands of various sizes, ages, and qualifications, "twenty head of mules, and three yoke of oxen" in the cultivation of 220 acres of cotton, 225 acres of corn, 30 acres of oats, and 8 acres of sweet potatoes.[20] All told he cultivated fourteen and one-fifth acres to the hand with twenty-six head of draft animals.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] The slaves were not charged with meat and meal, but were charged with molasses and shoes, articles customarily supplied by slaveowners.

[19] *Farmer's Journal,* July 1852, p. 102.

[20] *Arator,* April, 1855.

According to Upton Bruce of Nansemond County, Virginia, two hands to the horse was the proper proportion on soil which he designated "silicious loam"; but he admitted that on stiff, clayey soil a larger ratio of horses might be justified.[21] Edmund Taylor asserted in a prize essay that for a farm of 300 acres a working force of seven hands and six horses and mules was sufficient if only wheat and corn were planted.[22] James M. Chambers made the statement before the Southern Central Agricultural Association of Georgia that a good crop of cotton consisted of ten acres to the hand—"under favorable circumstances a little more may be cultivated and on some lands less."[23] As to tobacco and corn, Robert Russell is responsible for the assertion that a slave could, under favorable circumstances, cultivate twenty acres of Indian corn, but could not manage more than two acres of tobacco.[24] Tobacco not only demanded intensive cultivation, but in the ante-bellum period the curing and marketing of a crop required a great deal of time. As a result, planters frequently planted a new crop of tobacco before disposing of the old crop.[25] In the growing of all crops, the correct proportion of horses, hands, and acreage was largely a matter of individual judgment, but only the most enterprising planters consistently maintained what approached the proper adjustment.

On the large plantations there was a division of labor, and plantation work was so arranged as to provide almost constant employment for all slaves of both sexes above the ages of ten or twelve years. As a rule, the majority of slaves on the farms and plantations were field hands who either used the hoe or plough. Hoe work was, in the main, confined to women and children; but it was not uncommon for robust negro women to plough, especially in the rush seasons.[26]

[21] *Ruffin Papers,* II, 586.

[22] *Southern Planter,* March, 1861.

[23] *Plantation and Frontier Documents,* Phillips ed., I, 276.

[24] Robert Russell, *North America,* p. 141.

[25] *Southern Planter,* March, 1859.

[26] Barnard, *South Atlantic States in 1833,* pp. 321-322.

The small children were organized on the large estates into what was known as the "trash gang"—a group which was employed in burning brush, sweeping yards, picking cotton, and numerous other light tasks.[27] In addition to the field hands and "trash gang," there were house servants, and perhaps carpenters, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, ditchers, painters, coopers, cobblers, and cooks. The plantation of Richard Hines, near Tarborough, embraced 2700 acres of land on which there were 150 slaves. Among the slaves there were three carpenters, two blacksmiths, one painter, "three first rate house servants— one of them a seamstress,—a good hostler, and some of the best cotton pickers in the State."[28]

On the Clark plantation in Beaufort County, the proprietor, J. F. Clark, put his negresses to spinning, August 18, 1831, and on December 2, his shoemaker, Rueben, commenced making shoes. September 15, the women and the "trash gang" were picking cotton.[29] In winter, the field hands belonging to Mr. Clark engaged in cutting cord wood, splitting rails, and in clearing new fields; his cooper made turpentine barrels, and his negresses carded and spun cotton and wool.[30] Blacksmiths and wheelwrights, in addition to working for their masters, also served the people of the community at their respective shops on the plantation. Henry, the slave of J. L. Bryan, did all sorts of repair work for the people in his neighborhood, and his master kept an account of the same. For example, in January 1850, Henry did the following woodwork:

"Joseph Cooper, to repairing sulky shaft, $2.50.
"Elmsly Hoggard, making axle tree, 50 cents.
"H. B. Hardy, repairing one pair of cart-wheels, $1.25.
"H. B. Hardy, making wardrobe, $6.00.
"Estate of Geo. B. Outlaw, making coffin for George $3.00.[31]

[27] The work of the "trash gang" is noted in the Clark Plantation Book.

[28] *Standard*, Jan. 3, 1852.

[29] Clark Plantation Book.

[30] Since a certain amount of expertness was required of a weaver, much of the weaving was done by white women.

[31] MS. in the Bryan Papers, N. C. Historical Commission, Raleigh, N. C.

It may be said that large planters enjoyed a certain advantage over small planters in that they could better afford to have their slaves apprenticed or hired out to learn trades. The amount of repair work on a farm was hardly sufficient to justify a farmer in having one or more of his slaves taught some special trade; in consequence, the generality of small planters and farmers patronized the artisans of large planters. The apprenticing of slaves was not so common in the nineteenth century as in colonial times; for, once an artisan was installed on a plantation, it was no longer necessary to send young slaves away to receive special training.[32]

Again, in the matter of purchasing supplies, the large planters enjoyed an advantage in that they bought supplies in large quantities from wholesale dealers. The invoice book of Edmund Jones of Wilkes County discloses that in 1817 he purchased goods in Charleston from the firm of Mease and Holmes in the sum of $982.17.[33] T. P. Devereux, a large Roanoke River planter, purchased the bulk of his plantation supplies in wholesale quantities on twelve months' credit from Robert L. Maitland of New York.[34] Mr. Devereux also sold his cotton and corn in New York, and thereby gained the benefit of a more active market. Ebenezer Pettigrew, whose estate in Washington County consisted of 2500 acres and thirty-three slaves, had goods billed to him from northern cities; and his schooner, "The Lady of the Lake" carried cotton and other commodities to Norfolk and returned with plantation supplies.[35] By operating a schooner, Mr. Pettigrew probably effected a saving in the cost of transportation. Judge Ruffin, from his plantation near Graham, N. C., traded extensively with the firm of Andrew Kenan and Brother of Petersburg.[36] Plantation supplies were also purchased by him in Baltimore and

[32] About 1788 Benjamin Smith, presumably of Brunswick, N. C., sent four slaves to Charleston to learn trades. Custom Receipts, Port of Brunswick.

[33] MS. in the Lindsay Patterson Papers.

[34] Devereux Plantation Book.

[35] MS. in the Pettigrew Papers.

[36] *Ruffin Papers*, II, 314 *passim*.

New York and shipped by water to Norfolk, and thence by rail to Raleigh, where they were loaded on wagons for their destination in Alamance. The small planters with little capital and credit were under the necessity of purchasing supplies from nearby retail stores, and of selling their products in the local markets.

The overhead expense of the large planters was usually greater than that of the small planters, for the reason that the latter could and did dispense with the services of overseers and of certain functionaries around the dwelling, such as yard boy, coachman, and house servants,—functionaries whose presence lent something of stateliness to a slaveholding establishment, but whose services were largely non-productive. It is, perhaps, fair to assume that the waste on a large plantation was greater than on a small one, where the master and mistress scrutinized practically every transaction and exercised immediate oversight upon the care and conduct of the slaves.

The food given to slaves was, as a rule, coarse but ample. Underfeeding would produce discontent, promote theft, and impair the strength and effectiveness of a slave. The food consisted, in the main, of bacon and cornbread supplemented by potatoes, molasses, and vegetables in season. The proportion of meat to meal varied in different localities; but, generally, the allowance was a peck of meal and four pounds of meat weekly for each working hand. A contributor to the *Farmers' Journal* of May 1853 said, "Our plan has been to give men in winter five pounds of pork, clear of bone, and a peck of meal; and in summer we reduce the allowance of each one pound of meat and give a quart of molasses instead." On the plantations of J. Devereux, when potatoes were issued there was a reduction in the allowance of meal.[37] This plan was common on the majority of the farms and plantations. On the Jones plantation in Wilkes County,[38] only corn and bacon were issued to

[37] Devereux Plantation Book.

[38] After the division of Wilkes in 1841, the Jones plantation was in Caldwell County.

slaves from February to October; but, during November and December, beef in small quantities was issued as a substitute for bacon. During the hog-killing season, about the first of January, the slaves were given such delicacies as "spare ribs" and hogs' heads.[39] The record of allowances of food to slaves kept by Edmund Jones shows that corn was issued at varying intervals in quantities of from one to two bushels, and bacon in quantities of from about twenty to thirty-five pounds per slave family. No particular effort appears to have been made to fix a time limit for the consumption of a given amount of corn;[40] but, when bacon was issued, an entry was made showing how long the supply was expected to last, and the record reveals that no more bacon was issued until the time limit expired. Negroes prized bacon more highly than cornbread; hence the necessity of regulating the consumption of the former. In order to forestall waste and extravagance, it was virtually necessary to impose restrictions on the consumption of food; and, since the expense of feeding slaves was considerable, the master or mistress usually gave personal attention to the issue of rations.

The allowance of food for the effective workers was greater than that for children and the superannuated. On the Devereux plantations, "Montrose" and "Runoroi," the entire slave force was divided for purposes of feeding into two classes, hands and idlers. The table below gives the master's estimate of the annual allowance of rations for the two classes:[41]

			Hands		*Idlers*	
Family	*Hands*	*Idlers*	*Meat*	*Meal*	*Meat*	*Meal*
Simon	2	1½	312	104	204	78
Davy	1	none	126	44		
Hampton	2	4	312	104	208	104
Isaac	2½	½	390	130	78	26
Peter	3	1	468	156	156	52
Polly	2	6	312	104	416	196
Ransom	1½	4½	390	130	286	130
Bill	2	5	312	104	386	126

[39] "Book of Allowances" MS. in the Lindsay Patterson Papers.

[40] On this particular plantation corn, instead of meal, was issued to slaves.

[41] The exact year cannot be ascertained. The meal runs in pecks and the meat in pounds.

On a small establishment the slaves frequently ate in their master's kitchen. Consequently, there was no fixed allowance; but, none the less, economy was practiced in the kind and quantity of rations ordered for their consumption.

Another heavy item of expense in the maintenance of slaves was that of clothing. Since it was to the interest of the master to protect his slaves from exposure and consequent illness, they were provided in winter with outer garments made of woolen cloth; but in the warm months the clothing was scant and made of cotton. In general, the material from which the clothing was made was produced and manufactured on the plantation, and the tailoring was done by the mistress with or without the assistance of slave women. In summer the negro men wore only a single shirt and trousers, and the women were as scantily provided. In winter the outfit was somewhat more elaborate, consisting of a jacket, trousers, and shirt for the men and boys, and a chemise, petticoat, and frock for the women and girls.[42] Both sexes were provided with shoes in winter. Hats were not made on the plantations, and accordingly had to be purchased from dealers. Ordinarily, wool hats were worn by negro men in both summer and winter, while the negro women wore kerchiefs and sun-bonnets. Advertisements in the newspapers for runaway slaves give good descriptions of the kind of clothing worn by slaves at different seasons. In May, 1832, Thomas L. Cowan stated that a runaway slave, whom he sought to recover, wore a linsey woolsey roundabout, pantaloons, and a dark seal-skin cap.[43] In January, 1833, the runaway slaves of Elisha Hunter Sharp wore white wool hats, large black jackets of lion's skin cloth, and pantaloons of cotton and wool.[44] Another runaway in May, 1835, wore "an old brown fur hat, half worn or more, a thin striped jacket, and a pair of tow trousers."[45] It should be said, however, that

[42] See Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 266, and also the Clark Plantation Book.

[43] *Greensborough Patriot*, May 30, 1832.

[44] *Greensborough Patriot*, Jan. 30, 1833.

[45] *Ibid.*, May 13, 1835.

some slaveowners failed to provide their slaves with adequate clothing. Writing of conditions in Edgecombe County in 1810, a contributor to the Henderson Letter Book said the slaves were commonly well clothed, "but to this there are some shameful exceptions."

Clothing was generally distributed twice a year, in the fall and in the spring. On November 3, 1856, the following distribution of clothing was made on the plantation of James F. Clark:

"Prince, jacket, trousers, and shirt. Every boy on the plantation, jacket, trousers, and shirt. Jane's children have all their clothes. Patsey's baby, two yarn coats. Matilda, coat and shemise, Jane, frock and cloth to make petticoat. Esther, shemise and frock. Carolina, shemise and frock. Charity, shemise and frock. There can be no lie here. Amy's child, Louisa, has two dark yarn frocks with cotton sleeves."[46]

The cost of feeding and clothing a slave for a year has been variously estimated at different times. It was reckoned by James L. Watkins that in 1822 the total cost of feeding and clothing a slave together with doctors' fees amounted to $23.10 for each adult slave;[47] but for 1849 the same authority estimated the cost of feeding alone, in Virginia, to be $22.00 for each adult slave.[48] The cost varied with the time and was always conditioned upon the individual circumstances of the proprietor. Those proprietors who possessed the equipment, the labor, and the material for making shoes and clothing could, as a rule, supply their slaves with shoes and clothing cheaper than those proprietors who were under the necessity of patronizing the retail stores. As to the cost of feeding slaves, all self-supporting establishments were virtually on a parity, for

[46] Clark Plantation Book—Perhaps the mention of only one man in the distribution of clothing was due to the fact that in 1856 Mr. Clark hired out ten negro men to J. R. Grist. See ante, p. 77.

[47] "Production and Price of Cotton for One Hundred Years," Jas. L. Watkins. *Bulletin No. 9,* Bureau of Statistics, U. S. Department of Agriculture 1899, pp. 41-42.

[48] *Ibid.,* p. 36.

the small planter could raise corn and hogs as cheaply as the large planter.

Besides the occasional purchase of foodstuffs, planters must perforce purchase from dealers numerous articles which it was either inexpedient or impracticable to produce on the plantations. Every year J. Devereux purchased large quantities of salt, molasses, blankets, hats, cotton bagging, leather, tobacco, and a few shoes and boots.[49] In 1847 Ebenezer Pettigrew purchased twelve pairs of brogan shoes at $1.20 per pair and two dozen drab wool hats at $5.37 per dozen.[50] Judge Ruffin occasionally purchased quantities of cotton oznaburgs from which shirts and trousers were made for his negro men.[51] Such miscellaneous purchases were perhaps more in evidence in Eastern Carolina than in the piedmont, where the soil did not lend itself readily to the growing of staple crops, and where markets were inconveniently situated. A large planter like John Devereux, who cultivated the fertile lands of the lower Roanoke River valley, doubtless realized a greater net profit year by year by focusing attention upon the growing of market crops than by subordinating the staples in order to make his plantation approach the point of self-sufficiency.[52] Mr. Devereux's plantation book shows that the annual sales of produce from his plantations were considerably in excess of purchases, except for one or two years when there was either a flood or a panic. The plantation records, however, cover the period of the 'fifties, a time of rising prices, and consequently may not be taken as typical of financial returns over a longer period of years. Take, for example, the sale of cotton, corn, and lard produced on the plantation called "Montrose" in 1858:

73 bales of cotton @ 11¼	$3,456.55
99 bales of cotton @ 11½	4,805.73
30 bales of cotton @ 11½	1,561.70
3445 bushels of corn	2,185.03
3802 bushels of corn	2,205.87

[49] Devereux Plantation Book, *passim.*

[50] MS. in the Pettigrew Papers.

[51] *Ruffin Papers*, II, 310. Not much cotton was grown on the Ruffin plantations.

[52] Mr. Devereux raised both cotton and corn for market.

3299 bushels of corn	$2,229.75	
Sales of lard	70.80	
Total sales		$16,515.32
Total itemized expenses		3,255.77
Net profits[53]		$13,257.55

The amount of capital invested in "Montrose" cannot be ascertained definitely, but it was probably around $100,000.[54] If we may assume this figure to be correct, Mr. Devereux realized a dividend of approximately thirteen per cent in 1858. The profits for that year, however, were somewhat above the average. For instance, in 1857, the year of the panic, net profits totaled $4032.41; and in 1859 sales exceeded expenses by $9701.02. On the plantation called "Runoroi," in 1854, a typical year for the period, expenses amounted to $4926.40, while sales aggregated $9559.30. The Devereux plantations were favorably situated and well-managed; hence, any generalizations as to the profitableness of slaveholding in general based on these figures would carry little weight.

One encounters many difficulties in attempting to ascertain definitely whether the generality of slaveholders actually realized substantial returns from their invested capital. Statements of slaveowners and travelers on this point carry force, but not conviction. In the first place, there is a paucity of records, and those available furnish rather meagre data for deductions. A common error of most planters in reckoning profit and loss was to leave out of account the personal expenditure of the proprietor. A plantation was both an industrial establishment and a homestead; but, as a rule, plantation accounts fail to include household expenditure or any wages of management

[53] The itemized expense account includes overhead expense, such as taxes and overseer's wages, but not the expense of the proprietor's household.

[54] "Montrose" embraced 3313 acres of land, and there were 131 slaves on this plantation in 1858. If we place the average value of the slaves at $500 each, the capital invested in slaves was $65,500; and if we allow ten dollars per acre for the land, the real estate represented an investment of $33,130. Slaves and land represented a combined investment of $98,630. After making allowance for equipment, the total investment could not have been less than $100,000. The land and buildings on this plantation sold for only $12,000 in 1869. This information was supplied by Mrs. J. M. Winfree, Raleigh, N. C.

for the proprietor. Again, slaveowners were disposed to measure their wealth by the number of slaves they owned, frequently forgetting that, unless judiciously managed, slaves might become a liability instead of an asset. It often happened, as in the case of Archibald D. Murphey, that a slaveowner was forced to sell a part or all of his slaves in order to satisfy creditors.[55] At any rate, the weight of testimony with reference to North Carolina seems to indicate that many of the larger slaveowners were barely able to meet expenses. As early as 1784, the traveler, J. F. D. Smyth, observed that the planters in and around Halifax "were always twelve months in arrear."[56] A contributor to the Henderson Letter Book in describing the financial condition of the farmers and planters of Rockingham County said, "Too many of our farmers and planters owe the proceeds of their crops to the merchant before it is put in the ground." George E. Spruill, a cotton planter of the lower Roanoke section, on removing to Warren County about 1830, made this statement: "Even with the aid of a cotton crop we can but little more than make ends meet."[57] Judge Ruffin wrote, "My duty to my children requires me to labor, for my estate will not educate and provide for them.[58] A correspondent of the *Farmer's Register* stated in 1834: "We state as a result of extensive enquiry embracing the last fifteen years that a very great proportion of the larger planters with from fifty to one hundred slaves actually bring their proprietors in debt at the end of a short period of years. . . . planters are content if they barely meet their plantation expenses without a loss of capital."[59] Sir Charles Lyell, who visited North Carolina about 1841, noted that the masters of slaves, through false pride or through the love of their servants, refused to sell them, "hence they are constantly tempted to maintain a

[55] *Murphey Papers,* I, 158.

[56] Smyth, *Tour of the United States,* I, 99-100.

[57] *Ruffin Papers,* II, 18. Some allowance should be made here for the disposition of planters to complain of hard times.

[58] *Ibid.,* II, 154.

[59] *Farmers' Register,* I, 39.

larger establishment than is warranted by the amount of their capital, and they often become involved in their circumstances, and finally bankrupt."[60]

Financial stringency or flush times, and the rise and fall of the price level were factors whose operations were not confined to any class of slaveowners; but the class of larger slaveowners, moved by family pride and tradition, often affected a style of living not warranted by their financial condition. Negroes and land afforded good security for loans; and negroes, like land, could be mortgaged and sold under execution to satisfy one's creditors. Planters, however, were somewhat reluctant to mortgage slaves; and, if they became involved in financial difficulties, preferred to sell land or one or more slaves and continue to live in the style befitting the station of a planter.

[60] Lyell, *Travels in America*, p. 147.

SUMMARY

The beginnings of slavery in North Carolina are not clearly marked. Slaves in small numbers were brought in by the early settlers from Virginia, partly in response to overtures of the Lords Proprietors and partly as an incident of removing from a slaveholding community to an adjacent region. Not until the growing of tobacco for market in the region around Albemarle Sound came to be an important industry, was there a pronounced demand for slave labor as such. During the eighteenth century, there was a tendency towards concentration of slaves in the tobacco counties along the Virginia border and in the tidewater section of the Lower Cape Fear, where rice was grown for market. In these areas the plantation system appeared quite early; elsewhere in the Province slaves were scattered and informally controlled. The demand for slaves, while never excessive, was supplied with difficulty. Virginia was the chief source of supply, others were obtained in the West Indies, with practically none coming direct from Africa. There were no restrictions on the foreign slave trade before the Revolution, and it was not until 1794 that the legislature prohibited by a heavy fine the further importation of slaves.

Notwithstanding the introduction of cotton culture and its spread into the piedmont, industry in the early nineteenth century remained, for the most part, immobile. Exhaustive methods of tillage depleted the soil, with the result that slave labor was diverted into channels other than agricultural. Eventually, the more intelligent and progressive farmers and planters turned to soil improvement as a substitute for the old system of exhaustive tillage. Many planters sent or took their slaves to the fertile cotton lands of the Southwest, where, as a rule, they could be more profitably employed. Indeed, this movement of slaves and whites to the Southwest reached such proportions during the 'thirties as to render the whites left behind indifferent to the spirit of enterprise.

The sale and hire of slaves under certain circumstances was a well-established practice. In general, desirable slaves were sold reluctantly, under safeguards; but the vicious and refractory were sold promiscuously. Slaves were hired out extensively to the exploiters of turpentine forests, and in lesser degree to railroad and mining companies. The wage scale varied with the times, the skill of the laborer, and the nature of the task.

In the management of slaves on small estates, there was no general practice; but on the larger estates there was an approach to uniformity. To the more difficult matter of making the proper adjustment of hands to horses and land, however, each planter applied his individual judgment, with varying degrees of success. As a rule, the large planters of the East, by stressing the staples, farmed for a money profit; while the economy of the piedmont was largely self-sufficing. Speculation as to the profitableness of slaveholding, based on the testimony of planters, travelers, and others, seems to warrant the conclusion that in North Carolina slaveholding was not generally profitable.

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